Volume Forty-Five, Number Five, May 1968

Commentary

Election '68
The Democrats, Kennedy & The Murder of Dr. King
by Daniel P. Moynihan

Dean Rusk: In the American Grain *Edmund Stillman*
The Madmen of Sighet—A Story *Elie Wiesel*
Updike's Couples *John Thompson*
Relevance in the Synagogue *Milton Himmelfarb*
Europe & the United States *George Lichtheim*
Lévi-Strauss & the Primitive *Robert L. Zimmerman*
Metaphysical Obduracy *Kathleen Nott*

Books in Review

George Kateb *J. Coert Rylaarsdam* *Mary Ellmann*
Charles Issawi *Peter Shaw*

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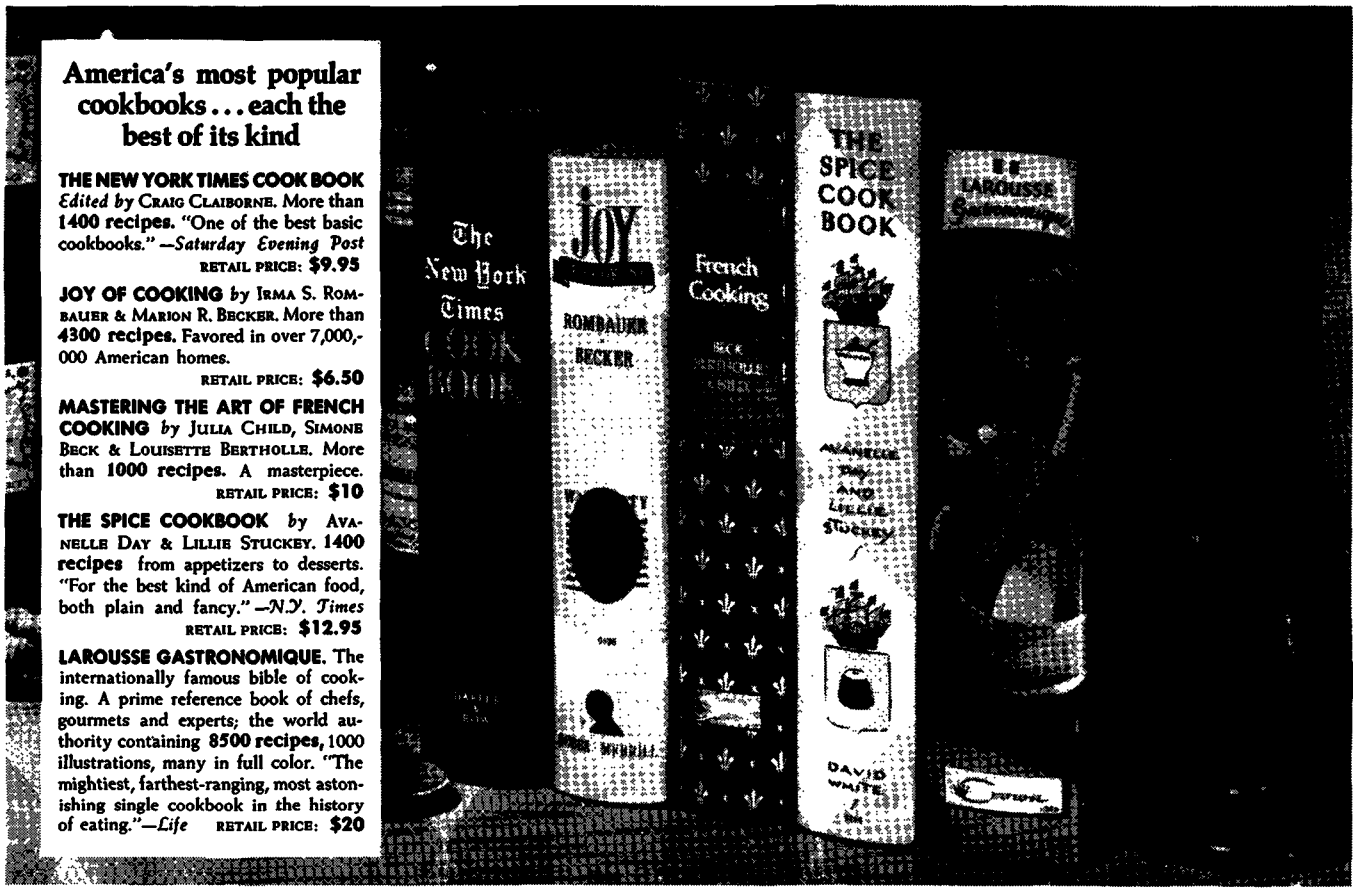

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Commentary

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Letters from Readers

Ugaritic Problems

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Having read Milton Himmelfarb's article, "Translating the Psalms," in the February COMMENTARY I would like to tell you that I never have advocated that Yahweh was a "dying and rising god like Tammuz-Adonis." As a matter of fact I have emphasized that Yahweh of Jerusalem did not die, thus opposing some Uppsala scholars! If you read the book *Psalm 89* you will find this out.

I hope that you will correct your mistake.

G. W. AHLSTROM
The Divinity School
University of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I share Milton Himmelfarb's irritation with the Dahood Anchor Bible translation of Psalms 1-50 for the reasons he gives in his article and the additional reason that I do not think a Catholic priest (or Fundamentalist minister or Orthodox rabbi) should have been assigned the responsibility of preparing a scholarly translation of either Hebrew or Christian scripture. I think too that Psalm 2 was a particularly inapposite case for translation in the light of Ugaritic antecedents, but this for a reason other than that stated by Himmelfarb.

Notwithstanding Himmelfarb's cavalier dismissal of the idea that any of the Psalms could be Maccabean in origin, it is as certain as anything can be in biblical criticism that Psalm 2 is in fact Maccabean. The Psalm is obviously an ode to a militarily victorious and expansionist king, composed for some festive occasion such as his marriage. While the addressee could have been a pre-exilic Judaean king, it is more probably a Maccabean prince, and most likely Alexander Jannaeus. In any event, whatever doubt might exist was removed by the composer's considerateness in framing the ode in the form of an acrostic reading *l'yanai v'ishto,* "to Jannaeus and his wife" (Salome Alexandra). . . . The chance probability of this combination of initial letters turning up in a Psalm whose content so accurately describes the person whose name the letters spell is one in some number with some thirty digits.

I am less inclined to take exception to Dahood's translation of *b'nai elim* in Psalm 29 as "gods" (which is as valid as the translation "prophet" for *ben nabi* in Amos 7:14). The Israelites adopted this Phoenician hymn long before the Exile, at a time when in the Hebrew faith Yahweh was at most the supreme god, but not the only god. As late as Qumran, the Essenes, at least, retained *b'nai el* in Deut. 32:8 (and probably *b'nai elohim* in 32:43) and even the Masoretes retained *b'nai elohim* in Gen. 6:2). . . .

LEO PFEFFER
Department of Political Science
Long Island University
Brooklyn, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Mr. Himmelfarb is unjustly critical of Mitchell Dahood's work as a scholar and unfair to him personally. He also challenges the stated purpose of the Anchor Bible, which is to present—for the modern reader—an exact scholarly translation and to reflect the religious thoughts of the biblical story. The Anchor Bible translation is not intended to express subsequent rabbinical or christological doctrine. Mr. Himmelfarb is presumptuous in assuming that Jews have a chosen proprietary insight into the Book of Psalms.

The church-sponsored translations have a Christian bias and the Jewish translations contain the bias of the rabbinical exegetes. The Gentile King James version is so admirably moving that it probably has never been surpassed in any of the translations by Jews, in English or other languages.

In preparing his sublime translation and comments, Fr. Dahood studied not only the traditional sources in Greek, Latin, Syriac, and the Masoretic text, but for the first time in history also examined the Ugaritic hymns of the kindred Baal worshippers in Canaan. The result is a genuine pioneer effort. The Ugaritic Psalms obviously had a profound influence upon, and kinship with, the Hebrew Psalms. They represent the religious ritual of the Canaanites who lived in intimate proximity with the Hebrews and shared a common literary tradition. . . .

Mr. Himmelfarb objects to the

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references to deities in the translation, but celestial beings are indigenous not only in the Psalms but throughout the entire Old Testament. I read the Book of Psalms by Dahood with a great sense of intellectual exhilaration. . . .

[Dr.] Isaac Horowitz
Bridgeport, Connecticut

To the Editor of Commentary:

I would agree with Milton Himmelfarb's comment . . . that it is a Jew's business to know Hebrew, and similarly with his observation that the suggestion is utopian. . . . I doubt very much whether many students of the language, whether Jewish or non-Jewish, could ever so attune themselves to its nuances . . . as to avoid the translation difficulties he mentions. . . . No contemporary reader will ever understand everything about these texts, or understand them in the same way as our ancient forebears did, though naturally more intensive language study will lead to more understanding. But I hope Mr. Himmelfarb will not consider it a blasphemy if I suggest that, given the conditions and exigencies of our life in the U.S., the return would probably not warrant the investment in time and effort. Jews should be familiar with Hebrew, but much more important, they should have a thorough Jewish education, even if that doesn't include much Hebrew; there's plenty that can and should be done in English. . . .

Robert Milch
New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

Milton Himmelfarb's article evoked a warm response in this reader. Not that I am an obscurantist, for I too teach Ugaritic, not to mention several other Semitic languages. But I find so much of Professor Dahood's work simply incredible for a very basic reason, which Mr. Himmelfarb has not mentioned.

The Psalms, admittedly, were liturgical. Liturgy is often couched in old-fashioned, even unintelligible language. Poetry often preserves ancient words or modern words with ancient meanings. This much of Dahood we admit, gladly, and profit from it.

But liturgy is always spoken. We cannot possibly conceive of the Jewish people preserving the Psalms for generations as a basket of consonants without any intelligible sound. I willingly admit that

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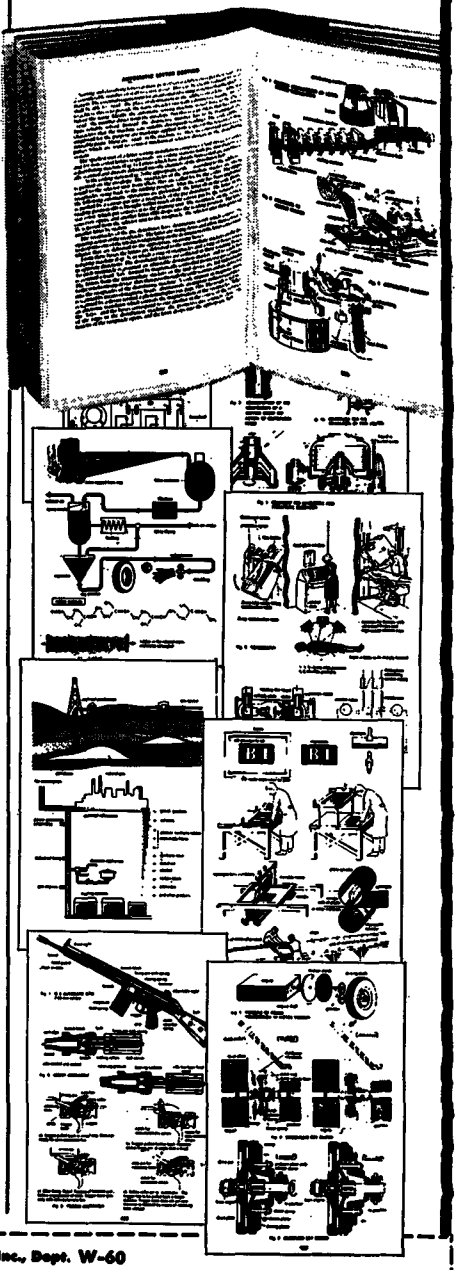

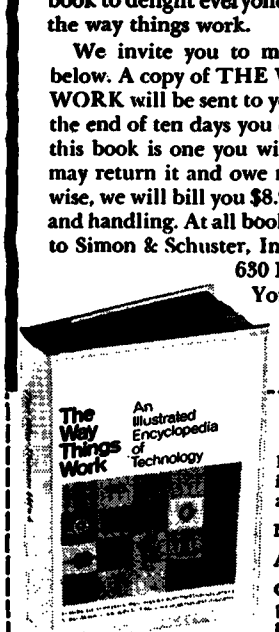

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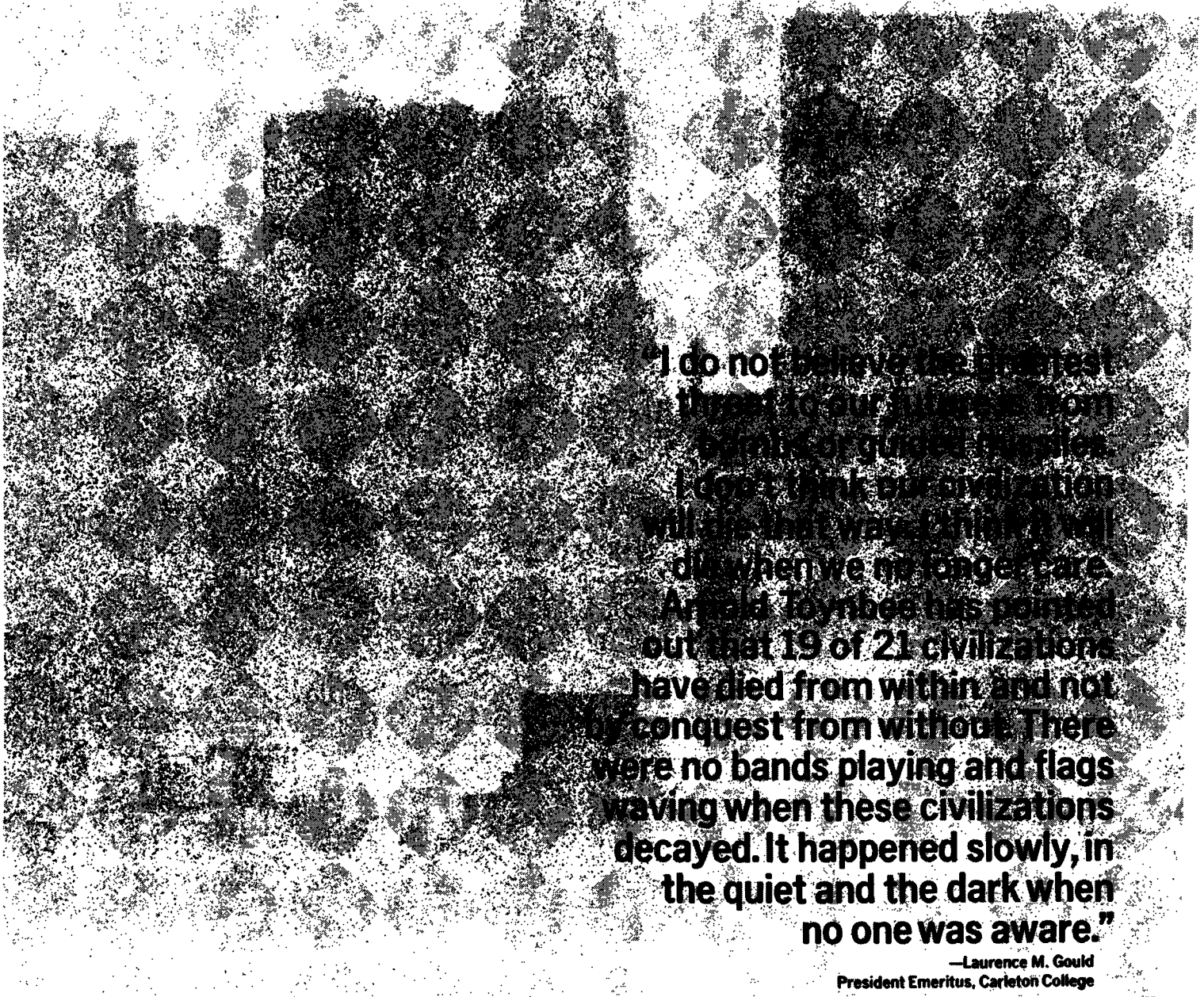

"I do not believe the greatest threat to our future from [illegible] or guided missiles. I don't think our civilization will die that way. I think it will die when we no longer care. Arnold Toynbee has pointed out that 19 of 21 civilizations have died from within and not by conquest from without. There were no bands playing and flags waving when these civilizations decayed. It happened slowly, in the quiet and the dark when no one was aware."

—Laurence M. Gould
President Emeritus, Carleton College

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Could this happen to us? To our families? To our way of life? Could this happen to America the beautiful?
Well, look around. You can see signs of it this very moment in every major city in this country. You can see it in the slums, in the jobless, in the crime rate. In our polluted air, in our foul rivers and harbors and lakes. You can see it in our roads strangled with traffic.

You know the problems confronting our cities. Now we must all do something about it. While there is still time. Before our cities become unfit places in which to live.

Why are the life insurance companies so concerned?
Our business involves people. Our service is security for their future. Unless the problems of our cities can be solved, we are dismayed at the prospect of greater personal tragedy and at the economic consequences.

The alarm has already been sounded. By the President of the United States. By concerned people all over America. America's life insurance companies—so long a part of the American scene and quite probably of your own life—are adding their voices to a call for action. We hope that call can help persuade men of good will, as businessmen and as private individuals, to act and act now.

Concerted action *now* can be effective. For the very cities that are suffering most have at their command human and economic resources unmatched anywhere else in this world. Now it is up to all of us to see to it that these resources are put to constructive use.

What can business and industry do?
The job of rehabilitating our cities, of making them fit for all to live in, must rest primarily with government. But it's a job too big for government alone.

It's everybody's problem. Business, labor, private citizens. Negro and white alike.

So everyone is needed to solve it. Help is needed in building and improving housing, creating job-training centers, re-evaluating hiring practices, participating in community programs of health and education.

Here are some efforts already under way:

As a start, Detroit auto companies have hired some 30,000 ghetto residents.

As a start, Aerojet-General Corporation bought an abandoned plant in Watts, staffed it with 430 unskilled employees and secured a 2.5 million-dollar Defense Department contract.

As a start, United States Gypsum Company has rehabilitated 12 slum tenements (250 units) in Harlem and is now engaged in other projects in Chicago and Cleveland.

The Avco Economic Systems Corporation recently opened a printing plant in Roxbury, Massachusetts, with 69 employees. The operation marks the beginning of a training and permanent-employment program for an eventual 232 hard-core unemployed.

The Fairchild Hiller Corporation, working with the Model Inner City Community Organization, is establishing a wood products plant in Washington D.C. that will eventually be community-owned, with newly employed slum residents sharing in profits.

A group of life insurance companies has made a commitment to invest 1 billion dollars for housing and jobs in slum areas. More than one-third of this has already been earmarked for specific projects.

Many other businesses throughout the country are taking up this call to action. But it's only a beginning. To make a truly effective beginning all businesses and industries must help. For the cost will be huge.

What can the individual citizen do?
First, the private citizen must educate himself to the dimensions of the problem. By reading. By listening to what his own civic leaders have to say. By pondering what responsible broadcast and newspaper leadership recommends.

He can take a further step in joining citizens' organizations, working with local educational and planning boards, and lending his support to community efforts to lick the problem.

And there are things he can do personally.

As a start, interested groups are working in cooperation with local labor unions in helping young ghetto residents of Newark, Cleveland, Buffalo and Brooklyn to enter the building and construction trades. By recruiting, screening, counseling and tutoring, they have already helped 250 men from the Brooklyn area alone to gain union membership.

As a start, a former auto worker has formed a committee which will soon have Watts citizens farming some 30 acres for themselves for profit.

As a start, individuals, local businessmen, and corporations in St. Louis have contributed over $150,000 to a neighborhood organization to rehabilitate slum dwellings and make possible resident ownership.

It's up to all of us.
Our cities have now become one of the greatest challenges facing this country. We feel America has the means to face this challenge and win.

What about you? Whether you are moved to act out of compassion or self-interest, do act. For whoever you are, whatever you do, you, in your own way, can help. And you can begin today.

For suggestions about kinds of constructive action you, your business, religious, social, or civic organization can take, send for the free booklet, "Whose Crisis? . . . Yours."

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I do not know exactly what the earliest worshippers understood when they saw the words *nšqw br* in Psalm 2, and I am sure that later generations had difficulty understanding them, for the versions offer several translations. But in any event, I am positive that the Jewish people pronounced them. And that means that there was a vocalic tradition along with the consonants. There is no conceivable way that the consonants could have been pronounced except in the form of words. The Masoretic vocalization, allowing for phonetic development, etc., must be the starting point for understanding the meaning.

With Ugaritic it is another matter. Only the consonants have been preserved, and while there must have been vocalization to fit the fixed tradition of their day, we haven't the slightest idea of what it was. But Professor Dahood is following a false methodology when he attempts to treat the consonantal text of the Psalms—which never ceased to have a living, vocalized, liturgical tradition—in the same manner that he would treat the consonantal text of Ugaritic poetry.

WILLIAM SANFORD LASOR
Department of Biblical Studies
Fuller Theological Seminary
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TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Milton Himmelfarb's judgment of Dahood's Psalm commentary, particularly his feeling that "it is a kind of demonstration project," is very apt. But it might be of interest to point out that, by way of Ugaritic poetry, Dahood has rediscovered truths about Psalm Hebrew that medieval Hebrew exegetes recognized as a matter of course: "double duty" words and particles (on 9:19, for example, Kimhi writes, "The preceding *lo* stands for two—that is the custom of Hebrew in many passages"); object suffixes for oblique relations (Kimhi on 5:5: "you" means "with you," on 13:5: "him" means "over him"); the abstract mate of a concrete term is to be taken concretely ("faith" of 12:2, says Kimhi, means "faithful men"); prefixed *l* may mean the same as *b* (Kimhi at 9:5; and Ibn Janah treats the overlapping usage of the prepositions fully in his grammar, *Rikma*); the imperfect verb form *yiqtol* often signifies the past (Kimhi on 18:7, 19, 21, 41, etc.). Even more interesting is the agreement of Dahood and Kimhi in finding allusions to the soul's dwelling with God after death all through the Psalms. . . .

It is no wonder that Father Dahood and Rabbi Kimhi so often agree in philology and theology. They share a concern to save the Hebrew text (though Dahood is willing, as Kimhi is not, to sacrifice the received vowels and even the vowel-letters in a pinch)—a concern that compels them to expand conventional or narrow conceptions of the scope of Hebrew usage. What hypersystematizing modern scholars could dismiss in traditional exegesis as *ad hoc* interpretation (e.g., the *b/l* interchange), can now be supported from comparative Semitic evidence. To be sure, the medievals had Arabic and Aramaic at their disposal, and they used them often and well. But the very familiarity of Arabic and Aramaic as well as their lateness in relation to biblical Hebrew render them less persuasive than newly-found and older Ugaritic as supports for "anomalies" in Hebrew usage. By appealing to Ugaritic, Dahood has sought to recover for the interpreter of Psalms the flexibility (apparently unknown to him) that was the hallmark of traditional Hebrew Psalm exegesis. In exercising his newly-found freedom Dahood has gone too far, as Himmelfarb justly complains. . . .

The theological agreement between Dahood and the Jewish medievals on the soul's destiny after death can hardly be considered apart from traditional Jewish and Catholic teaching on the afterlife, in the light of which many passages in the Psalms have been interpreted. Dahood has not materially advanced scholarly understanding of these passages by invoking Ugaritic mythical material. The strikingly divergent pagan and Israelite views on the realm of the dead make simple comparisons wholly inadequate. Ugaritic cannot save the traditional interpretation (though a case might be made for it on other grounds).

From time to time a far-fetched rendering of Dahood's actually turns up in medieval exegesis—pursuit of novelty at any cost being no monopoly of moderns. . . .

My single serious reservation concerning Himmelfarb's review touches on his sanguine implication that by "knowing Hebrew" one can expect to understand Psalms. Without that one certainly cannot. But the tradition of the meaning of Psalms is so spotty (in contrast, say, to that of the Torah)—as a glance

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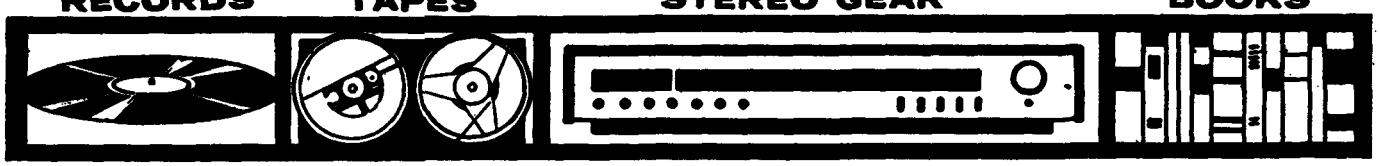

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at the wide divergences among the medieval Hebrew exegetes is enough to show—that the conventional interpretations known to the average Hebraist are often hardly more secure than Dahood's most far-fetched conjecture. This being the case, the professional scholar finds Dahood's work genuinely helpful in shaking him out of the rut of convention. . . .

MOSHE GREENBERG
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

MR. HIMMELFARB writes:

In "Translating the Psalms" I said that the Scandinavian school finds paganism everywhere in the Bible, and as an illustration I gave G. W. Ahlström's *Psalm 89: Eine Liturgie aus dem Ritual des leidenden Königs*. I further described the book as considering YHWH to be a dying and rising god like Tammuz-Adonis. That description is not quite accurate.

Dr. Ahlström wrote (pp. 165 and 172):

> . . . we must reckon with the existence of a god Dwd [David] in Israel. This deity was a "vegetation god" [i.e., fertility god], who may be compared with Baal and perhaps was identical with him. . . .
>
> Though occasionally some would have it that Yahweh suffers death and rises again, that is not exactly so. There are indications that sometimes, in certain circles and certain places, Yahweh was conceived as a dying and rising deity, but in the Jerusalemite conception of Yahweh this was not a lasting characteristic. Instead, Yahweh redeems the young god, "his son" Dwd, from the realm of death. . . .

[*A controversy between Father Dahood and Mr. Himmelfarb will be appearing in a forthcoming issue.*]

Endorsement

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I was surprised and disappointed to see in Neil Compton's article, "TV Again" [February], no mention of NBC's *Star Trek*. It has been my observation that the show is very meaningful for high-school and college students, not the least of its value lying in the symbolism of the half-human Mr. Spock, with his green blood, who somehow stands for all our not-quite accepted minorities of both race and religion. . . . In a very nice way, a way acceptable to all of them, he puts across some very telling comments—and students are getting it, and discussing it, and changing their own self-image because of it. Young women, too, are finding in the show an acceptance of the "career girl" which is giving them back their dreams of a future in which they too can play a role.

Star Trek is so popular here on campus that during the recent uncertainty about its continuance, our student congress proposed a massive, all-campus petition to be sent to NBC. Since the show was salvaged, they voted to send instead a commendation, which I heartily endorse. . . .

LOIS SANTALO
Department of English
Ohio University
Athens, Ohio

Publisher's Protest

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Your reviewer of *The Master and Margarita* by Mikhail Bulgakov [March] might have taken the trouble to get his facts right before accusing Grove Press of rushing through our translation of the book in the knowledge that we would have to beat Harper & Row. All it would have taken was a telephone call from Ernst Pawel to us to correct this before it appeared in print.

The facts are that Grove commissioned the translation of *The Master and Margarita* immediately after the first installment appeared in *Moskva*, unaware that anyone else was proceeding with another translation. Harper kept its own project quiet until several months had passed, and when word finally leaked out about Harper's impending publication, our own translation had advanced to the point where it would have been impossible to discard. As it happened, the availability of the Grove translation makes it possible to compare the novel in two different versions, and, in fact, your own reviewer concedes that ours is the superior translation. Evidently, in using the phrase, the "Moskva-Grove version was significantly mutilated," he failed to make the necessary line-by-line comparison between the two versions, nor did he point out that Bulgakov never finished the book while he was alive. His unfinished novel, including drafts of chapters representing duplications, was prepared for print by a group of Soviet editors and writers. For instance, your reviewer claims the sentence, "One of man's greatest sins

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is cowardice," is dropped from the Grove version for political reasons. Had he looked at pp. 334 and 386, he would have found the sentence, not once, but twice, with the one difference that the word mistranslated in the Harper version as "sin" is given its correct rendering in the Grove version as "vice." If your reviewer prefers to regard this editing process as censorship, that is his privilege, but in the interest of truth, he should have explained the circumstances instead of fighting the cold war over one of the great masterpieces of modern Russian literature. I would appreciate your correcting the most salient points of Mr. Pawel's review. . . .

FRED JORDAN
Grove Press, Inc.
New York City

Mr. Pawel writes:

Having no intention of fighting any war, hot or cold, over Mikhail Bulgakov, I am saddened by Mr. Jordan's martial interpretation of my remarks. At the same time I fear that he may be carrying his pose of outraged innocence a bit further than his own facts warrant.

Grove did indeed commission the translation of the *Master and Margarita* immediately after the first installment appeared in *Moskva*. In the absence of copyright agreements between the U.S. and the USSR this was their privilege, as I pointed out in the review. But if they really were "unaware that anyone else was proceeding with another translation," I can only marvel at their monastic seclusion. The publication of Bulgakov's novel created a sensation in Moscow which was widely reported on in the American press; several British and American publishers immediately submitted bids for English-language rights to the appropriate Soviet agency, and in February 1967 the New York *Times* carried an item to the effect that Harper & Row had acquired the American rights. Mr. Jordan may have been too busy to read the papers, but—to repay his kind advice—all it would have taken was a phone call to *Am-Rus*, the local representative of Soviet authors and publishers, in order to establish the facts concerning the Bulgakov book.

I did say that Mrs. Ginsburg's translation was superior, which is all that needs to be said on the subject since she herself elaborated on the fine points of her superiority at such great length in the correspondence columns of the New York *Times Book Review*. I also regard the Grove Press version as truncated, but if Mr. Jordan prefers to view censorship as a form of editing, I won't quarrel with him; the line . . . is sometimes hard to draw.

I am sure that a line-by-line comparison of the two versions will reveal many more interesting and indeed significant discrepancies beyond those Mr. Jordan was kind enough to indicate, but in talking about how "the availability of the Grove translation makes it possible to compare the novel in two different versions" he either misses the point or is disingenuously attempting to obfuscate it. Bringing out two versions on the same day had the effect of lessening the impact of a masterpiece. One of these versions was obtained through legitimate channels, the other in ways that, in the absence of applicable laws, are only *legally* unimpeachable.

Again, I think aggressive enterprise is sorely needed in publishing, but I think it might more profitably be applied toward constructive purposes. Grove Press was within its rights in doing what it did, but not in now assuming a stance of moral indignation.

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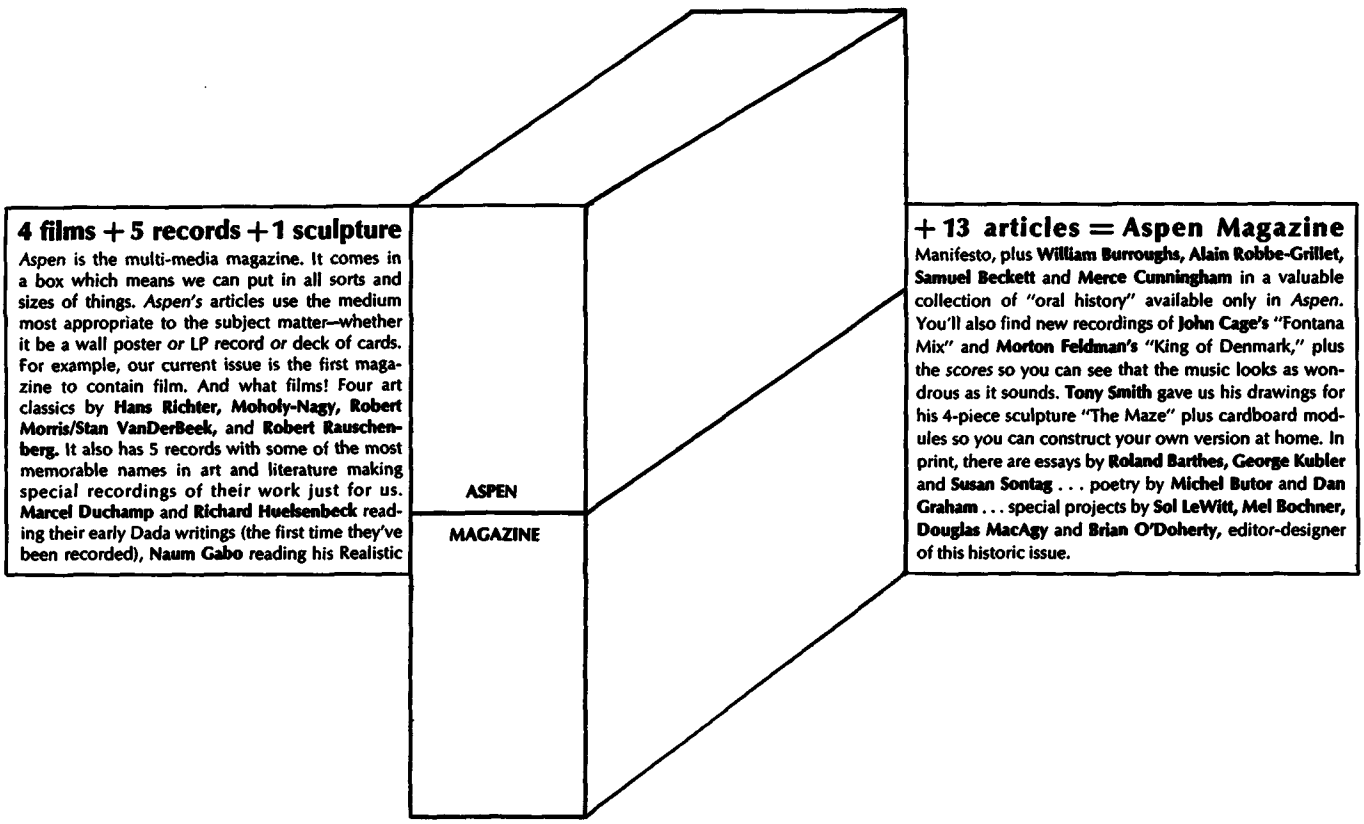

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In contrast, our next issue on Far Eastern Thought will be brimful with five rolled scrolls: a Kuo Hsi landscape (Sung dynasty, 11th century) . . . a calligraphy scroll from the Palace Museum on Taiwan . . . a Ch'an masterpiece by Yü-Chien . . . a yard-long frieze of Indian temple sculpture . . . a Tibetan *thanka*.

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The Democrats, Kennedy & The Murder of Dr. King

Daniel P. Moynihan

This article is the third in a series dedicated to exploring the alternatives open to the responsible liberal voter in 1968 (see THEODORE DRAPER's *"Vietnam & American Politics" in our March number and* MICHAEL HARRINGTON's *"Voting the Lesser Evil" in last month's issue). The series, offering a variety of viewpoints on the political issues involved in the Presidential campaign, will continue through October of this year.* DANIEL P. MOYNIHAN *is a member of the national board of Americans for Democratic Action and a co-chairman of Negotiation Now! He was an Assistant Secretary of Labor under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, and is now director of the Harvard-MIT Joint Center for Urban Studies.*

WE—and I speak here as a member of the liberal wing of the Democratic party—we won. And then, almost immediately, we lost again. That seems to be the way it goes for us at this moment in our history.

The murder of Martin Luther King, Jr. was such a shattering, ominous event that we have almost forgotten that it occurred in the wake of a stunning political victory of which King, having been among the first to link the Vietnam war with the issue of race and poverty and violence at home, could be considered one of the principal architects. But we mustn't forget. We must hold on to the realization that reasoned and non-violent opposition to the course of American foreign policy did prevail, when everyone on the Right said it would not, and everyone on the Left said it could not. If that was possible, may it not be that other, not less impossible, things can also be achieved?

In miserably pondering the demonic realities of racism, both white and black, in America once again, we must hold on to the logic of this proposition as to sanity itself. The first and most essential point is that the American political system has shown that it can correct itself, even under the gravest of threats. The war in Vietnam created an issue like none other in our history. All the more significant, then, is the fact that faced with strong and rising opposition from the *center* of the political system—e.g., the voters of New Hampshire—those in charge of national policy pretty much reversed themselves. The retirement of the President is an act without precedent, but the substantive point is that policy changed almost routinely in response to a changed public opinion. This is what is meant by the democratic process. Before New Hampshire, there was plausibility in the idea that the democratic process was breaking down in America. After New Hampshire, we know that it has not broken down, that it works.

Like all wars, Vietnam imposed great strains on that process. With the sudden and sharp escalation of military action in the spring and summer of 1965, there followed the familiar onset of intolerance and hysteria, except that this time *"les terribles simplificateurs"* arose not on the far Right of the political spectrum, but on the far Left (restoring, indeed, some measure of meaning to those eroded terms). Obviously not all opposition to the war came from this quarter. But the Left seized the issue, and came near to controlling the terms in which it was discussed, especially among the politically active young. The war, which even many of its supporters could see was a blunder, was declared also to be a crime, or rather the illegal act of an illegal society: the post-Leninist phase of capitalist self-destruction, a genocidal episode in the imperialist context of *Pax Americana*. The indictment of American society escalated as fast, and perhaps even faster, than the bombing. No institution escaped the scorn and detestation of the new radicals, but it was toward the Presidency that they directed the full fury of their apocalyptic conviction. *Hey, hey, LBJ: How many kids did you kill today?*

Where the climate of political discourse was concerned, *they* were winning. They were not, however, making any dent on policy itself. But as the war went on, and went badly, as the prospect of stalemate, even defeat of a sort, began to impress itself on the public mind, larger and larger proportions of public opinion began to register disaffection. As the destructiveness of the war began to be realized—and to this realization the new radicals did, one must concede in all fairness, make an important contribution—more and more persons came to see that, to the very extent our objectives could be thought honorable, they probably could not be achieved. Destroying villages in order to "save" them made no sense, and certainly gave no satisfaction. Ever more prominent persons, in ever greater numbers, began to voice their dissent. Then, as the draft threatened to reach into the ranks of the middle-class youth attending the better universities, opposition to the war moved into the streets, and an intellectual position was transformed into something like a mass movement, and not always an especially civil one. Within this movement, the heroic resistance of the NLF to imperialist oppression was easily identified with the onset of black violence at home, and justified as the natural and proper response to racist oppression here; simultaneously, and somewhat contradictorily, the cost of the war was cited as the reason for the nation's inability to deal with the needs of its

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own people. All this was said to legitimate—and to some extent it did indeed bring on—deliberate disobedience of law and the use of force and violence to promote the cause of peace.

FOR THE first time since the Revolutionary War itself (apart from a mild Southern emigration following the Civil War) some Americans began to go into exile, and many others talked of doing so. The more privileged, the better situated a young man might be, the more likely he would be found to detest his country. There were observers who recalled the alienation on just such terms of Liberal England in the years before World War I, and the consequent effective death of that polity. One observer, the President himself, remarked in misery and puzzlement to an aide: "They are the best generation of young people we have ever had, and they are all against us."

Yet his prolonged response to such opposition, given his concern for the armies he had sent to Asia, was to become more rigid and more moralizing—a response which suggested that words and ideas could never change him, and which only seemed to confirm the assumptions behind the radical *mystique*, now increasingly a *politique*, as the election year approached. The death of liberalism was confidently proclaimed in the *New York Review of Books*, while *Ramparts* set about planning the final confrontation with the reactionary technocracy which liberalism—Judas creed that it was—had all along sustained by pretending to oppose. In the fall, Richard Rovere, a careful and honest man, wrote that we were "half out of our tree," and as the spring of 1968 came near, the conclusion seemed inescapable that the "great republic," to use John F. Kennedy's term of pride and attachment, was approaching a condition of instability.

The test of a democracy—of any nation—is whether at such moments it submits to the forces of disintegration, perhaps alternating between panic and passivity, perhaps freezing in a kind of traumatized hysteria, or whether it forces a change upon its leaders through the instrumentalities at hand. American democracy has passed that test. As much as any event in our history, the retirement of President Johnson was the work of the popular will. Eugene McCarthy and Robert Kennedy provided the necessary focus, but McCarthy was entirely right in saying that "this change began among the people. It was largely the expression of their will that changed the shape of American politics." The decisive voice came from the demos itself, and the meaning of what it said was unmistakable. In demanding a change, the people turned not to new and experimental modes or men, though there were plenty of such available. They turned instead to two men who represent and may both be thought to embody an old and established tradition: that of Irish, Catholic, Northern, Democratic politics. It is a tradition of common sense and compassion, but also predictability and a measure of caution. It is liberal without being especially ideological; idealistic without being greatly abstract; but most of all it *is* a tradition. In turning to Kennedy and McCarthy, the people—those who did—were asking for leaders who could get control over events again and carry on with the work that had seemed to be going so well when, of a sudden, everything began going so badly.

The men who know enough about American government and the Presidency to have faith in it, and who have had the courage (it has taken that!) to say so in the period just ended, have now been vindicated. John Kenneth Galbraith kept insisting, in the face of not a little scorn, that the "center" peace movement was having an effect, and would eventually prevail. By and large the leaders and followers in that movement have earned a place in American history. Singular honors go also to Richard N. Goodwin, who before most (certainly before this writer) understood what the Vietnam war would do to domestic programs, and who was perhaps the first to see how a transfer of power within the Democratic party could be effected (see "A Political Fiction" by

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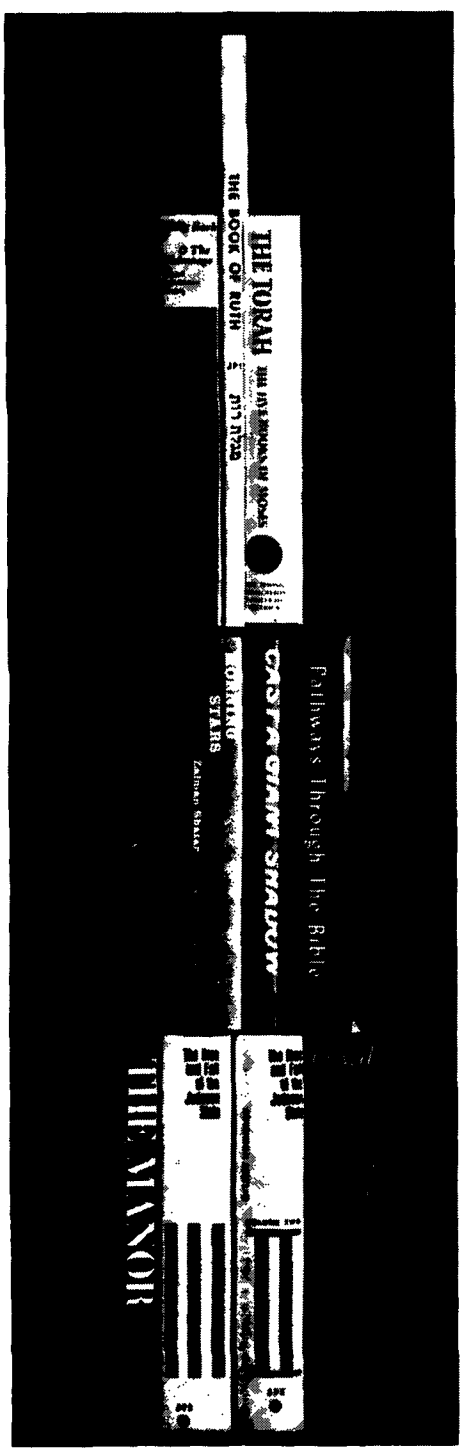

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"Bailey Laird" in the *New Yorker,* September 16, 1967). But, to repeat, it is the people who were finally decisive: it is to them the President bowed, out of his own perception that the unity and stability of American society were at stake. His decision not to seek reelection was, as Kennedy promptly declared, a "truly magnanimous" gesture, but not at all uncharacteristic either of the man or the office. The truth of the matter is that American democracy works. We happen to be in a time of desperate troubles, but the system is still working. Those who so recently placed their bets, as it were, on its failure have lost. The rest of us won.

THE SECOND essential fact of the present moment is not quite so exhilarating. It is that in the descent toward instability, and toward its own demise, the Johnson administration severely compromised two related principles of foreign and domestic policy that with greater or lesser intensity have guided American national government for the past generation. In foreign affairs the principle has been that the United States would be an interventionist power in those circumstances in which totalitarian expansion—Fascist, Communist, whatever—threatened the balance of world order, and that in general the United States would assume an active peace-keeping function in the world. The corollary of this principle has been that the United States should be willing to devote a considerable portion of its resources to overseas aid and subventions of various kinds. In domestic affairs the principle—less settled perhaps, but also less and less disputed—has been that the national government will be similarly interventionist and supportive on behalf of those groups, defined by race or condition or whatever, and those areas of the country, which are significantly worse off than the nation at large, and that federal funds and federal leadership would be actively employed to promote the general welfare, broadly and generously construed.

While these principles have had a fair measure of bi-partisan support, and were not at all repudiated during the eight years of the Eisenhower administration, they were nonetheless Democratic far more than Republican principles, and were seen to be such. Thus the main thrust of Democratic criticism of Eisenhower in the late 1950's was not so much that he was pursuing the wrong goals as that, leading a party which did not really care enough, he simply could not summon the energy and conviction to attain to them.

This line of criticism was nowhere more emphatically voiced then in the field of foreign affairs, where it was argued that the Dullesian doctrine of massive retaliation, by leaving the nation with the option of doomsday or concession to Communist expansion, repeatedly in fact resulted in the latter. Only by developing special forces capable of flexible and graduated response, said the liberal Democrats, could the Free World meet Moscow or Peking, or whomever, on their own terms, *and prevail.* (Whence cometh the Green Berets.)

Similarly, while few denied that President Eisenhower maintained the domestic programs of the New Deal more or less intact, or that he took the initiative—the first President ever to do so—to employ federal troops to enforce desegregation decrees, his lack of energy in pursuing matters further, and his apparent lack of conviction as to the power of government to "change the minds and hearts of men" were declared to be fatal flaws of character, comprehension, or both. Again, as in the case of foreign policy, it was argued that this lack of energy and will, this failure to master events, could only lead to a worsening of conditions—class conflict, racial tension, a deteriorating quality of life at home, and a loss of leadership abroad, with all the potential for chaos that such a loss implied. For all practical purposes, then, the Democrats represented themselves as the party of stability: of security abroad and tranquility—true tranquility, not just the papering over of serious difficulties—at home.

This is a complex argument. Stability, after all, is popularly associated with the *dis*inclination to change things, and change, especially in the hands of Democrats, is as likely to be associated with trouble as with anything else. What is more, the Democratic President himself has declared that he is stepping aside in the interests of a national unity that obviously has been at the point of collapse. It comes to this. For nearly eight years Democrats have controlled the national administration. For part, at least, of that time they have been in a position to do almost anything they had in mind to do at home, and throughout have done whatever they would abroad. Nevertheless, social stability and national unity have not been enhanced, but rather have sharply deteriorated. Does it not follow that there is something seriously flawed about the two basic principles of foreign and domestic policy to which liberal Democrats have been committed?

WE LIBERAL Democrats had best begin asking this question of ourselves, or else others in the months ahead—Richard M. Nixon, for one—will surely be asking it for us. From our point of view the trouble is that the answer that is least damaging to those principles—namely that the men in charge of affairs during this recent period have simply not been up to the job—is manifestly not the case. On the contrary, it would be difficult to find in American history a collection of government executives as talented as those John F. Kennedy brought to Washington, and most of these men, especially in the foreign affairs and defense areas, stayed on with President Johnson. The chief executives themselves were superbly qualified for the office. Surely, not men but principles must be at fault. And herein lies the maximum danger of the 1968 election. Now especially, with the issue of the President's personality removed, the campaign is likely more and more to involve attacks of one kind or another on that basic commitment to active leadership abroad and purposeful social change at home that has given shape and direction to American government for the past generation.

From the New Left we have just experienced, and only barely and tentatively turned back, a savage assault on the central tenets of American foreign policy, going far beyond the question of Vietnam

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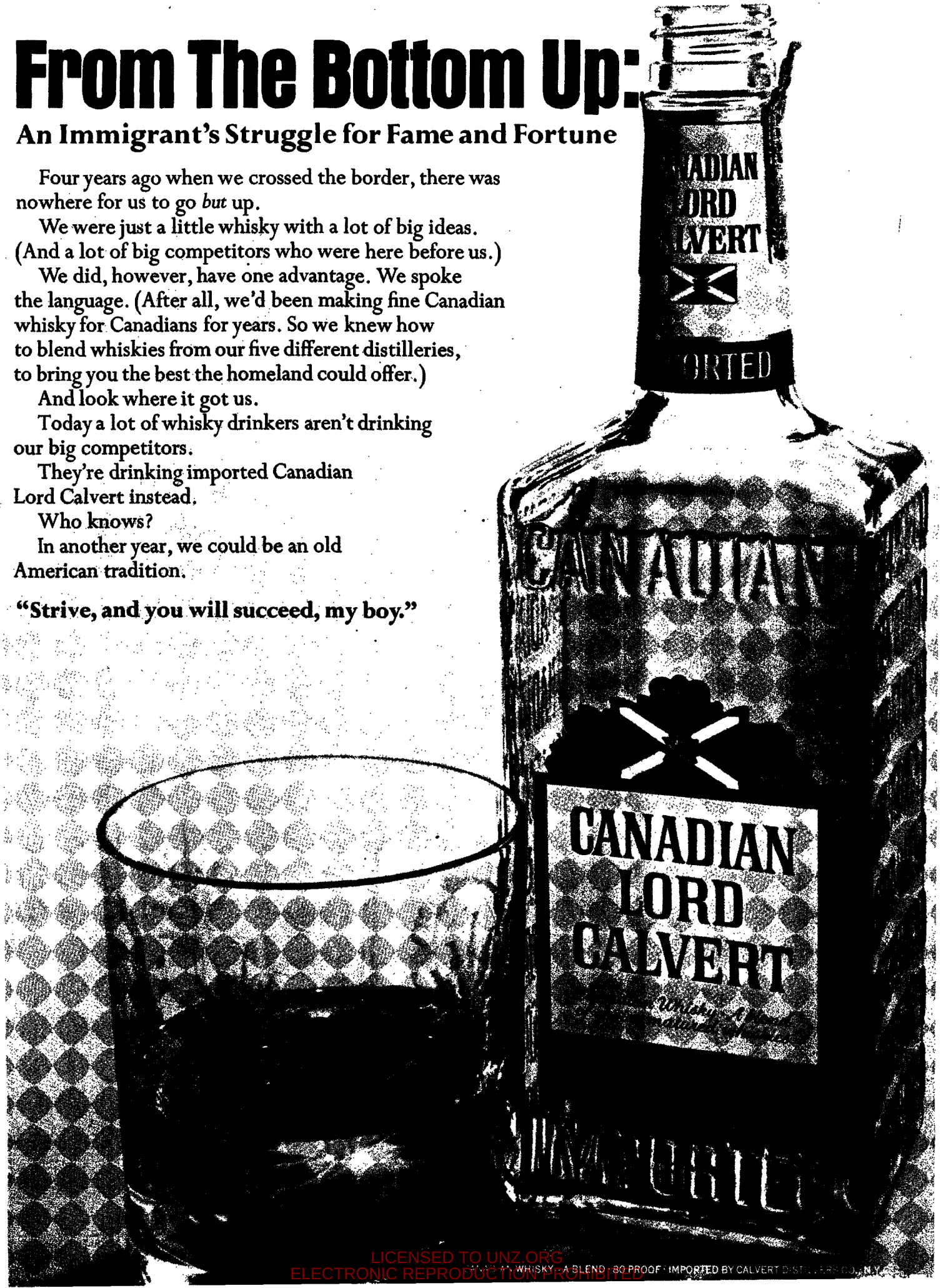

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alone. We have every reason now to expect a not less furious—and not dissimilar—attack from the Right. Especially if, as seems likely, some form of negotiations begins over Vietnam and enters a phase of protracted haggling, accompanied by charge and counter-charge, and not a little military action on the side. The win-or-get-out mood has been at least as widespread as the peace-at-any-price position, and significantly, both end up pretty much at the same point of repudiating the principle that the United States will actively involve itself in maintaining the peace of the world—by force of arms when necessary. Already on the Left the views of Kennedy and McCarthy as against those of the administration are scorned as a distinction without a difference. The Right—the Goldwater vote—is fully capable of producing a simplistic isolationism of its own variety.

In domestic affairs, the assault on the principle of federal interventionism comes from a different and more diverse constituency. It can be dated almost precisely from the moment of the Watts riot of 1965 when Negroes were widely thought to have assumed, in effect, the role of aggressors bent on disrupting the social, economic, and "power" relations of the larger society. The social-welfare and civil-rights posture of the administration, far from being seen as the best defense against domestic anarchy, was taken by this diverse constituency to be a prime source of anarchy. Further effort would only "reward rioters." In this case, however, the Johnson administration, desperate for support in the effort it believed itself to be making to maintain international order, in effect conceded its complicity in the onset of disorder at home. Beginning with the 1967 State of the Union message, civil-rights and poverty issues practically disappeared from Presidential pronouncements, to be replaced by disquisitions on Safe Streets and Crime Control Acts, and other euphemisms for the forcible repression of black violence. When his National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders came forth in March of this year with a book full of solidly "traditional" proposals for preserving social stability by inducing social change, the President refused even to receive the report. There is, for example, no letter of transmittal in the official text.

What—as someone else in not altogether dissimilar circumstances once asked—is to be done? A very great deal is at stake. We are in danger of losing not only the substantive gains that began to be made under Kennedy and then, for a while, continued to be made under Johnson, but also the vision that gave clarity and purpose to the fight for those gains. The plain fact is that the present trend of events is leading us toward a conservative Republican President and a conservative-to-reactionary Congress: a regime marked by indifference to events abroad, save for intermittent threats to blow up the world, and by hostility to social change at home.

If this disaster is to be averted, two jobs will have to be done by liberal Democrats. First, we will have to rethink the experience of the past seven-and-one-half years in order to reach some judgment as to what went wrong, and how it might be set right, now and for the foreseeable future. And second, we will have to nominate a candidate for the Presidency who can run and win in the light and in support of those judgments.

LET ME suggest a beginning in the form of a list of things which may have contributed to some of our failures of the recent past.

High on any such list would be our disposition to be too much interested in ideas, especially if they are new, and too little interested in administration. We pay altogether too little heed to the "ecological" conditions in which the ideas are set loose, their wonders to perform, and then to what thereupon actually happens. We leave these matters to the civil service, as if they were beneath the notice of gentlemen. Eight years ago it was enough to pick the brains of academia and come forth with a torrent of new proposals. Ideas were then in short supply: they are no longer. If anything, indeed, we have on our hands a considerable assortment of ideas-in-being that are yet to be fairly tried out. The Alliance for Progress comes immediately to mind: a vast and noble commitment now pretty much in mothballs. In domestic matters there is a formidable backlog of untested ideas (not all of them necessarily good) contained in published documents of Presidential commissions, and confidential reports of White House "task forces."

An inventory of commission reports now gathering dust will give some idea of the interdiction of domestic initiative brought on by the war: "Technology and the American Economy," report of the National Commission on Technology, Automation, and Economic Progress, February 1966; report of the White House Conference "To Fulfill These Rights," June 1966; report of the Advisory Council on Public Welfare, "Having the Power, We Have the Duty," June 1966; report of the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice, "The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society," February 1967; report of the President's Advisory Commission on Rural Poverty, "The People Left Behind," September 1967; and, finally, the report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, March 1968. Only a small number of the myriad proposals in these volumes —and none of the significant ones —have even been put before the Congress, and hardly any enacted. The backlog became so embarrassing that at first the President refused to accept the Crime Commission document, much as he rebuffed the Riot Commission, while for a period the White House actually suppressed "The People Left Behind."

Apart from this plenitude of untested ideas are the concepts which were in fact "fielded" and which we must be prepared to account for. Obviously not everything worked out as planned. Thus, looking back it would seem clear that the idea of counter-insurgency, sound enough in Latin America, did not take account in Vietnam of the deep roots which the Communists had struck among the people during the war against France. So, too, the "bedlam" of community-action programs, to use Bayard Rustin's term, that emerged from

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the poverty program and very nearly brought it to grief, were based on an interesting set of theories, but failed utterly to take into account the ethnic disarray of most American cities, and the propensity of such animal-like organisms as City Halls to fight back when attacked.

If we are concerned with what works, and not merely infatuated with our own ideas, we must try to evaluate the innovations we ourselves set into motion in the early 60's. To be sure, there have been successes, the most conspicuous being the "new economics" which has nearly doubled the GNP since its adoption. But what of the Area Redevelopment Administration, the first important new institution created by Kennedy? If anyone could discover just where the Bureau of the Budget hid this program, it would be interesting to learn what, if anything, it has done for Appalachia. And what is to be made of persistent reports that the compensatory education programs financed by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act have been ineffective? Or is that not the case at all?

The point is that at this phase in the cycle, for those seeking office, evaluation of existing programs is as much a measure of competence as the ability to propose new ones. To march merrily on to what Goodwin has called the "foreseeable futilities" of yet more acronymic agencies in OEO or HEW is to convict oneself of a fundamental lack of seriousness. And to suppose that the issue of the Vietnam war is resolved now that President Johnson has taken himself out of the campaign is to risk the charge of dishonesty. The war is no more his personal doing than is the "military-industrial establishment" or the Gross National Product. In truth, it is very much the work of the men who formulated the critique of Dulles & Eisenhower, and who went to Washington with Kennedy. As William Pfaff writes, "Vietnam is American liberalism's war," and it simply will not do for liberals to pretend otherwise. There are, of course, liberals like David Riesman, Hans J. Morgenthau, and Benjamin V. Cohen who spoke out against it when there was still time, but the great mass of American liberal opinion was uncritical, indeed approving, until the war began to go badly. It was Lyndon Johnson's tragedy to accept advice that made things get worse—if only in terms of scale—and then to deny that they were getting worse until reality finally broke through. John F. Kennedy might surely have done better, but it remains the case, again to cite Pfaff, that "If the American intellectual and political community could confront, not Lyndon Johnson, but its own responsibility [for the war in Vietnam] it is conceivable that the 1968 election could articulate a reappraisal not of personalities but of American principles."

CLEARLY, the principles which have to be reappraised are the twin principles of interventionism: *reappraised,* not discarded. In the field of foreign affairs, as Eugene McCarthy has stressed, we will have to learn to recognize the limitations of our power—which is to say the limits on our resources as well as on the effectiveness of those resources. But this is no less true in the area of domestic problems. For on any list of things that have contributed to the miscalculations of the decade, one would have to place the disposition of liberal Democrats to underestimate and misinterpret the forces in American society that are resistant to meaningful change and which limit the power of the federal government to bring such change about.

It is necessary to come to terms with what might be called the conservative reality. We have for too long been bemused by the Democratic majority in the Congress and the tradition of the Roosevelt coalition. Majority it is, and coalition it was, but rarely has either been liberal on a sustained and consequential basis. If the terms liberal and conservative have any meaning, it is to describe not so much doctrines as tendencies. Both tendencies exist in both parties, although of late liberals have had a (precarious) majority only with the Democrats. Liberals are disposed

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toward and, generally speaking, optimistic about social change and innovation, usually on behalf of some new possibility, or some underprivileged group (which normally becomes quite conservative once it gains a place for itself). Conservatives, by contrast, are disposed toward the existing order, perceiving in things-as-they-are the relatively successful results of past efforts at improvement, and if need be preferring the evil that is known to that but dimly foreseen. (And of course there is a plenitude of stupidity and venality in the ranks of both groups, not to mention the vast number of racists and outright reactionaries in American public and private life.)

For a generation or more liberals have commanded most of the initiative and most of the social prestige in the nation, but in a curious way the conservatives have been the gainers. As one after another "underprivileged" group has been brought into the "system," given a claim on its resources, a voice in the direction of its affairs, and an identification with one or more institutions that are manifestly part of the established order, the number of locked-in social arrangements has increased very considerably, and the capacity of government to change things has in direct consequence diminished. In all the evolving meanings of the term "property," we have become very much a property-owning democracy, and behave just as the 19th-century Tories predicted such a society would behave. Once granted, rights are not easily taken away from groups in a property-owning democracy. Thus, twenty years ago the Taft-Hartley "slave labor" law took away from the building-trades unions the right to maintain a closed shop. Twenty years later the closed shop in the buildings trades is more strictly in effect than at any time in history, and no administration has dared attempt to enforce the law that declares it to be illegal. What is more, once gained, *privileges* are not easily given up. Witness the appalling record of the building-trades unions in apprenticing Negro youth.

This is hardly to suggest that there is little or no radicalism in the United States. There is enough, and then some, but increasingly it is to be found in the educated middle class: persons so secure as to have transcended the restraining concerns of ordinary folk, much as princes were said to be magnanimous; or so sensitive as to find bourgeois society intolerable, whatever the alternative.

But there is a conservative majority (one perhaps especially disapproving of middle-class radicals), and this means that government-induced social change is not only likely to be slow, but will be slowed down even further if pressed in ways calculated to agitate and alarm that majority. It is not an especially articulate majority—it is not articulate at all, which possibly accounts for its rather continuous bad temper—but it does vote, and can command, in the sense of obstruct, events. To prevent it from doing so requires a continuous effort of reassurance and elucidation. President Johnson has been sensitive to this need, even too much so. But it is one thing to instruct Jack Valenti and the maid to turn out lights in the White House, and to keep track of how much money is saved; it is another to respond meaningfully, and not just symbolically, to genuine concerns. In this respect, for example, our approach to school integration, when lower-class populations are involved, has been a model of how not to reassure conservatives: principally because it has proceeded from the premise that middle-class whites (or Negroes) have nothing to lose, which is not true (*vide* the Coleman report), or that their concerns are unworthy, which is not necessarily true either, and is, in any event, irrelevant. If we acknowledged possible losses, would we not be more readily believed when we spoke of probable gains?

QUITE APART from the growth of ideological (or non-ideological) conservatism, it is to be expected that the diffusion of the middle-class ideal of participation in government will also result in a restraining influence on the ability of government to bring about certain types of social change. The processes of government are already complex enough and are likely to become more so. The consent of ever more numerous and subtly defined groups is required in order to carry out a government policy, be it to wage war in Asia, to build a highway in San Francisco, or to transfer a school principal in the Bronx. The widening demand—much encouraged by liberals with respect to disadvantaged groups—for an almost plebiscitory participation by a profusion of publics in government decision-making will further limit the power of government to reorder the social system. It will not necessarily affect the government's power to act, for the ever increasing resources available to government suggest that ever bigger programs are on the way. But the more democratic the control of such programs, the less probable is it that they will involve significant redistributions of power, or even sharp alterations in the direction of public policies.

A related, if distinct, source of liberal Democratic difficulties in recent years has been a too rigid, too automatic rejection of Republican ideas, and especially in the form of conservative criticism of liberal ideas. (It might be asked, for example, whether the Commission on Civil Disorders heard any detailed proposals from conservative economists. The answer, very probably, would be that they did not.) Yet without any particular notice being given to the fact, conservatives have come forth with what are surely two of the most interesting program proposals in years: Milton Friedman's negative income tax, and the suggestion originally put forward by Congressman Melvin Laird to provide direct, non-categorical federal aid to state and local governments. (Robert Kennedy has recently come out for Laird's revenue-sharing idea, while the "NIT" has practically become liberal doctrine.) In addition, much conservative criticism of the *effectiveness* of government programs is turning out to be more right than wrong, or at least to include some extremely good questions. As James Q. Wilson points out, there are limits—to return to that word again—to what can be accomplished by large, hierarchical organizations, particularly when they are required to operate within

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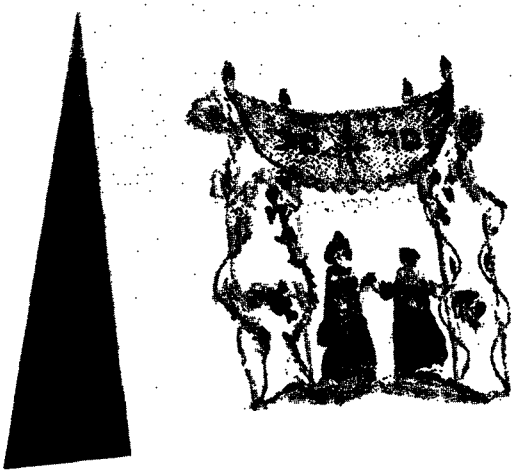

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the kind of rules Americans lay down for government bureaucracies. This is something conservatives have been trying to tell liberals for a long time.

Finally, there is the matter of rhetoric. "Few ideas are correct ones," Disraeli says in *Contarini Fleming,* "and what are correct no one can ascertain; but with words we govern men." Hence the choice of words is in a significant sense a choice of government: certainly an immense influence on the process of governing, and one to which too little attention is paid. The great liberal failing of this time is constantly to over-promise and to overstate, and thereby constantly to appear to under-perform. Over-promising is a human enough failing, but a steady diet of disappointment (e.g., the war on poverty) is anything but healthful for the body politic. Thus, on the day of King's funeral, across-the-board cuts were announced for anti-poverty funds in Northeastern cities. Surely in some measure the disaster of Vietnam was brought on by the messianic rhetoric of the cold war. And that rhetoric persists, not just with the President and his administration, but with his strongest critics. Thus Robert F. Kennedy concluded the announcement of his candidacy for the Democratic nomination by declaring: "At stake is not simply the leadership of our party and even our country. It is our right to moral leadership of the planet." Now the Senator knows full well that even if there were such a thing as "moral leadership of the planet," it would not be a position to which the concept of "right" could possibly adhere. By definition. And certainly the notion makes no sense coming from a man leading a national revolt against just such messianic delusions.

The rhetorical escalation of issues is a serious problem in domestic affairs no less than in foreign affairs (which are in the main run by professionals with fewer illusions about words). One of the calamities of the present moment is that we have taken over the vocabulary and moral imperatives which were relevant to the civil-rights movement in the South and have applied them with but few alterations to the social and economic problems which are the crux of the matter in the North.

THE CONSEQUENCE is that we make fewer and fewer distinctions between those issues which are correctly defined as having to do with race, and those much more accurately, and usefully, defined as matters of social class. The Kerner Commission gave further impetus to this tendency, and the murder of Dr. King may make it irreversible for the moment. Nevertheless, it should be resisted. It is impossible to solve class problems when they are treated as if they were race problems. There is precious little government seems able to do about racial feeling, whereas there is a great deal that can be done about class problems. King was, after all, in Memphis to support a strike of garbage men. Most of them happened to be Negroes, but they were striking for union recognition and other traditional and legitimate working-class demands which governments can meet (most governments: Memphis appears to be different). This is not to deny that the problem of racism is agonizingly real in the United States, and that it is the source of the lower-class status of so many urban Negroes. But it is to assert that when the issue at hand is a recognizable problem of lower-class behavior—crime, violence, welfare dependency, low educational achievement, certain kinds of unemployment, or whatever—behavior as much to be found within white groups of the same income and class level, not much good and very likely some harm is done by turning directly to the subject of white guilt. Once again attention is diverted from the Negro community, where the problem and the need are both located, to the white community where it came from. In the meantime caste victimization, to use Lee Rainwater's term, proceeds apace, and the victims are Negroes.

A less visible consequence of the preoccupation with white racism is that the nation—and Democratic administrations of a liberal bent—have persistently failed to recognize a fundamental source of difficulty in the fact that the South remains an economically, socially, and intellectually underdeveloped area, for whites as well as for blacks. Poor Southern whites are in one sense even more isolated than blacks. Thus there is probably not a single quality university or college outside the South today that does not have a special recruiting program which discriminates quietly in favor of Negro applicants. But such a program for poor Southern whites would seem unthinkable: are they not racists? They are, and that is why they need help.

The period immediately ahead will be a crucial test of whether we have learned anything from our experience of the past eight years. Will the assassination of Dr. King bring the nation to its senses? Six weeks ago (as I write) he asked me to come to Miami to speak to a group of urban ministers he had assembled. We had a few words together: he was somber, subdued. "The Congress," he said, "is sick." It was and no doubt is, but surely it has been shocked into recognizing this. The looting and burning and killing that followed the assassination will be used by some to argue for repression. And surely, plain physical *fear* of the Negro is now a political fact of American life, and not a happy one for liberals. More, then, is it incumbent on us at this time to lead and to educate within the limits of our own understanding. The assassin of Dr. King was no doubt a racist. It is not clear what can be done quickly about such men. But those roving bands of marauding youth are the classic product of the slum: familiar to every generation of American history save perhaps the one just passed. And we do know what to do for those children. We must create full employment, provide some form of income supplement, build houses, and devise social institutions that work for them. We know *how* to do each of the first three things, and are beginning to get ideas about the last. Let us put forth our program—not fifty items: five will be almost too many—and ask the Republican-Southern coalition in the Congress to act. If they do, well, let them take credit and, for all I care, let them take office. But they won't. They are too frozen in fear. We liberal Democrats will then be left to offer ourselves in the 1968 elec-

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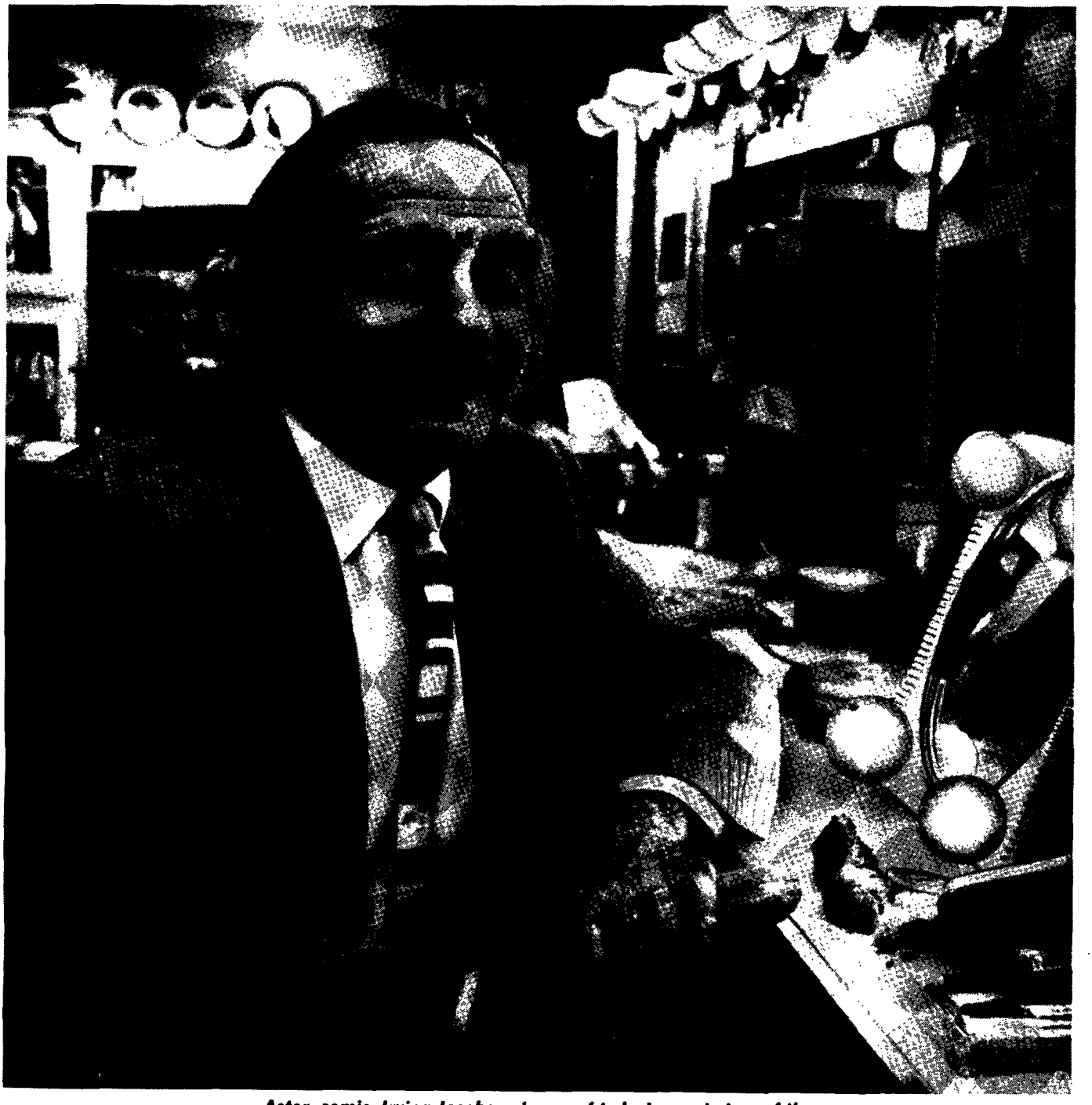

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tions as the party that knows what it wants to do to keep this country together.

Who, it remains to be asked, is the candidate embodying that knowledge best, and with the best chance of making it prevail?

THE RETIREMENT of President Johnson transformed the 1968 election; a few days later the murder of Dr. King transformed it anew. Prior to that murder, any liberal Democrat might seriously have hesitated between Kennedy and McCarthy; some others would have favored Hubert Humphrey. McCarthy has done more than merely make us proud to be Democrats, he has made us glad to be: an effect Stevenson himself did not always achieve. The influence he has had on political rhetoric—it is already to be perceived and surely will continue—would by itself earn him a place in the history of this decade, and in the hearts of some, at least, of his countrymen. Humphrey is ever an honorable and gallant man. The Republican party has not the equal of either, much less both. But in the aftermath of the assassination of the leading civil-rights leader of the age—of our history—and one of the very few men still capable of talking hope and non-violence to black people—in that aftermath, the claim of Kennedy on the Democratic nomination has become irresistibly strong. Let me, as one who, for example, voted for McCarthy at the ADA National Board meeting, try to explain why I now believe the Democratic party, representing, as I think it does, stability through change, must turn to Kennedy in Chicago.

The assaults on his personality have been not less vicious than those directed against Lyndon Johnson, and events have not always helped. (Thus he had decided to challenge the President *before* the New Hampshire primary, but there is no point in trying to get anyone to believe it.) The truth, as much as there is one truth about any man, is that he represents what is strongest and best in the liberal, Democratic tradition. So, of course, do McCarthy and Humphrey. But Kennedy has a far better chance of building the bridge between white and black that will have to be built if the nation is not indeed to become two nations. The night of King's assassination Kennedy stood on a flatbed truck in the center of the Indianapolis Negro slum and said these words:

> For those of you who are black and tempted to be filled with hatred and mistrust at the injustice of such an act against all white people, I can also feel in my own heart the same kind of feeling.
>
> I had a member of my family killed—he was killed by a white man, too. But we have to make an effort in the United States and get behind these difficult times. . . .Go home and say a prayer for the family of Martin Luther King and, more important, a prayer for our country.

Those were the first words he had ever spoken in public about his

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brother's death. The time had come to do so, and he did. And they listened to him—*because they know who he is.*

Robert Kennedy's brother was a man often thought by those around him to be too cautious, too conscious of difficulty; we can now see that he was closer to the reality of pain and mistrust and danger everywhere than most of the rest of us were. Schlesinger puts it perfectly:

> I believe today that its basic source may have been an acute and anguished sense of the fragility of the membranes of civilization, stretched so thin over a nation so disparate in its composition, so tense in its interior relationships, so cunningly enmeshed in underground fears and antagonisms, so entrapped by history in the ethos of violence. . . .His hope was that it might be possible to keep the country and the world moving fast enough to prevent unreason from rending the skin of civility. But he had peered into the abyss and knew the potentiality of chaos.

Robert Kennedy is another such man. Much has been given him, and taken from him in life, and somehow he has been enlarged by both experiences. He has, moreover, the character and intelligence to declare that a policy he himself helped to devise—our involvement in Vietnam—is wrong and should be changed. Most of all, he symbolizes, in this time of tragedy, the will and the ability to surmount tragedy and to prevail against it. With the nation divided, he gives us the hope that we will pick up where his brother left us, and where King was trying to lead us. Of King, let it be said, as Auden did of John Kennedy:

> *Remembering his death,*
> *How we choose to live*
> *Will decide its meaning.*

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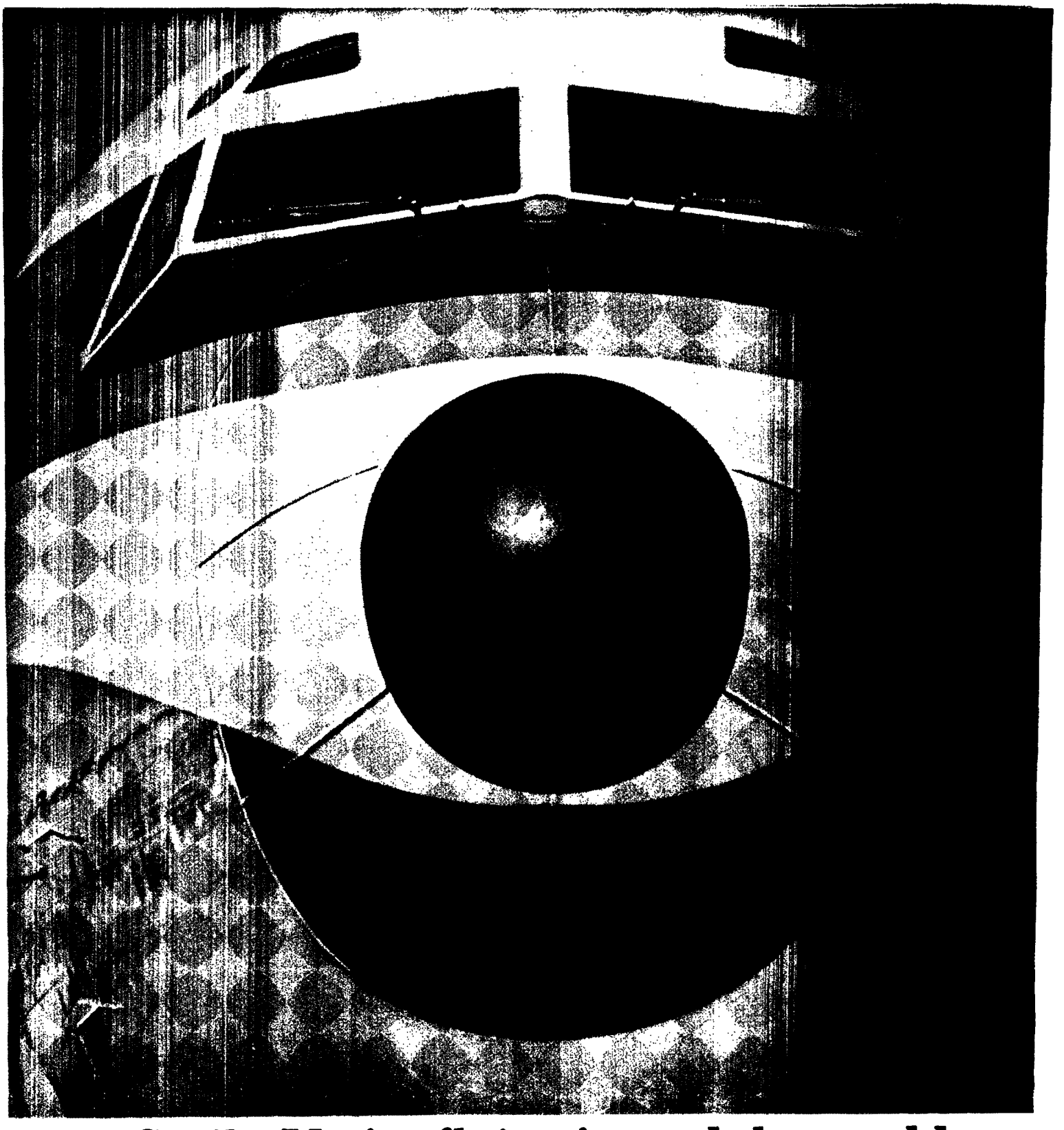

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Dean Rusk: In the American Grain

Edmund Stillman

I have more confidence than some commentators do in the wisdom of our people and their capacity for understanding the essentials of policy. But public opnion can neither devise policy nor carry it out. It cannot debate it effectively unless the issues are framed and presented for discussion, accompanied by the factual background. It cannot even follow and support, in our kind of society, unless it knows where we are trying to go. . . . whether we move with zest and confidence in our public affairs or plod along in apathy or bewilderment turns in large part upon the morale which flows from the White House.

—Dean Rusk, "The President," April 1960

It is not true that I have any generic attitude toward all those people who call themselves or are called intellectuals. . . . Now, I think that an idea stands or falls on its own merits and the fact that a man knows everything there is to know about enzymes doesn't mean that he knows very much about Vietnam or how to organize a peace or the life and death of nations.

—Dean Rusk, to the press, October 1967

WASHINGTON today is a tired city. Seven years after the opening of the New Frontier by the Kennedy administration, a little more than three years after the triumph of its successor, the Johnson administration, in one of the great landslide votes in history, Washington suffers an emotional and intellectual exhaustion. Everywhere the seemingly insoluble problems come crowding—a Vietnamese war with no satisfactory, indeed not painfully humiliating, end in view, racial violence at home, the alienation of the young and the intellectual elites, the gold hemorrhage, the decline of NATO and the poisoning of the European diplomatic atmosphere, a halt in progress in reaching understanding with the Soviets, the nation at large increasingly isolated in the world, mistrusted by its allies, left virtually alone to fight battles and great causes for which no one else in the world seems much to care.

One by one the great figures—the paladins—of the New Frontier have departed the scene, some like Robert Kennedy into open opposition, others like former Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, Presidential Aide McGeorge Bundy, and CIA Director John A. McCone into a protective obscurity. The departure of McNamara, once the single most powerful of the President's councilors, the most self-assured in devising policy, merely underscores the exhaustion and malaise. Widely interpreted in the press as the act of conscience of a man disturbed by the moral ambiguities of America's war in Asia, who could in the end do no other, the departure has left some case-hardened Washington cynics with a more dispiriting belief—that McNamara simply reacted to the calculation that the war could no longer be won. Indeed, the President's own decision to avoid the uncertainties of political combat in this election year would suggest that he has come to a similar conclusion himself.

"Washington isn't *fun* anymore," a Defense Department aide complained, on the day McNamara took his leave. "My God, now it's *Dean Rusk's* game," he added bitterly, as if somehow that Dean Rusk should inherit the mantle of greatness in this administration were a final measure of its fall from grace.

But that Dean Rusk, as Secretary of State, should emerge in this late hour as the chief prop of the administration's public policy has little about it that smacks of historical accident. Rusk, the ambitious son of a back-country Georgia preacher who found his way to a Rhodes Scholarship and Oxford, has served a good many masters —General Stillwell in the China-Burma-India theater for nearly three years during the Second World War, General Marshall in the Pentagon immediately thereafter, and, switching to a civilian career in 1946, Secretaries George Marshall and Dean Acheson in State—always winning a certain limited regard for reliability, diligence, and a verbal facility for clear statement uncomplicated by a penchant for profound thought. But like so much else in Rusk's career, his present rise to public prominence and his emergence as the chief advocate of the American military intervention in Vietnam, seem more the result of a process of political subtraction than a tribute to native excellence. Throughout that career, as other choices have failed one by one, Rusk has repeatedly emerged as the last resource—the man to whom fate, with apparent reluctance, turns. Rusk, in the opinion of more than one observer, is the congenital survivor—not because he is in any sense a mere time-server or opportunist but because, as a

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compulsive noncombatant in the jungle wars of Washington's bureaucracy, his own position has been so difficult to identify. It is testimony to his self-contained style that a colleague who worked with him for nearly twelve months on the Palestine question in 1947 cannot to this day testify what Rusk's personal opinion of the issues was.

His initial rise to public office in the Kennedy administration was just such a choice by default—a choice over more glittering, but potentially unmanageable or politically embarrassing appointments like Adlai Stevenson, Chester Bowles, or J. William Fulbright, the first a formidable competitor for public opinion, the second an excessively liberal political embarrassment, and the third a man tainted by Southern racism. As a loyal Democrat of essentially conservative stripe, as a former journeyman Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs during the Truman administration (an obscure public service marred only once in 1951 by an ill-considered public call for mass rebellion against the Peking regime and American measures to aid the insurgents), at the time of his appointment withdrawn to innocuous and unassailable dignity as president of the Rockefeller Foundation, Rusk became the inevitable choice—the single available choice that could give no offense.

But in the early winter of 1960, if Rusk was a figure of eminent respectability, he was also, to the nation at large, a figure of near total obscurity. If there is accident in his rise to high office it is merely that in those months when the newly elected President was assembling his cabinet, Rusk delivered a series of lectures before the Council on Foreign Relations in New York—that body which Richard Rovere only half-frivolously would later identify as the very habitation of the American Foreign Policy Establishment, those who, in J. K. Galbraith's functional definition, are repositories of the Conventional Wisdom and are fit to be entrusted with great responsibility by either party. Chief among those lectures was one entitled "The Presidency," later published in the Council's house organ, *Foreign Affairs*, attracting some attention at the time as an attack on the then modish notion of summit diplomacy.

In those years the Soviet Union, under the leadership of Nikita Khrushchev, with much world support, was given to a style of crisis diplomacy that relied on frequent calls for meetings face to face by heads of state; but Rusk did not see why, if Khrushchev called, the American President must always answer. The Presidency, in Rusk's view, was a unique office, an august one, and not to be demeaned. And apart from the philosophical issue, there was the severely practical one of the character and quality of the combatants. Not without a certain engaging irony, contrasting the outgoing President with Khrushchev, Rusk had noted: "The one is impulsive in manner, supremely confident as only a closed mind can be, tempted to play for dramatic effect, motivated by forces only partially perceived by the other, possibly subject to high blood pressure; the other is deeply committed to principles for which his adversary has only contempt, weighted down by a sense of responsibility for the hundreds of millions who have freely given him their confidence . . . a man limited by conscience and policy in his choice of tactics and argument, a man with a quick temper and a weak heart."

This, as the historians of the New Frontier unanimously assent, was the decisive factor—so bereft was the country at that time (Robert A. Lovett had declined the post) of suitably decorative and yet unexceptionable diplomatic specialists. In any case, we are informed that it was specifically this assessment of Soviet-American diplomacy that brought Rusk to the attention of the newly elected President. According to Theodore Sorensen's recollection, "Rusk had been highly recommended by Lovett and Acheson. Kennedy, who had never met him, summoned the former diplomat from a meeting of the Rockefeller Foundation of which he was president . . . talked briefly and somewhat vaguely with him about an article Rusk wrote on the Presidency, and called him the next day to say the job was his."

What the new President can have found to admire in the article is not entirely clear. On the level of practice, Kennedy was far from diffident in seeking summit confrontations with the Soviets; clearly he intended to conduct a personal diplomacy of his own. The real significance of the article lies elsewhere, for the central issue eventually became moot. Summitry is a style of international negotiation which depends necessarily on the availability of flamboyant and commanding personalities to represent their nations. It is not for mere politicians and faceless *apparatchiki*, and with the passing of Khrushchev, Eisenhower, and Kennedy from the world scene, the style itself has waned.

Thus, in retrospect, it is not Rusk's apparently tough-minded refusal to conform tamely to the Soviet diplomatic style or even his stolid insistence on the conventional machinery of diplomacy in preference to dangerous innovations that give the clue to his actions as Secretary in the years that followed. Rather, in this address it is Rusk's reverential, one might almost say sacerdotal, view of the Presidency that looms large. "With deep compassion we can acknowledge that his [the President's] are burdens which no man ought to be asked to bear," he observes in tones that can only be described as hushed, adding "that the problems before him may reach beyond the capacity of the mind of man." And it is just this repeatedly expressed awe for the majesty of the office, together with the strict rule of self-abnegation Rusk in this address demands of those who would wish to serve

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the leader, that foreshadow his later handling of the role.

For Rusk, in practice as well as theory, the Secretary of State has not been a maker of policy. He has acted as a functionally neutral adjunct to the office of the Presidency—truly a *secretary*, one who sorts out and systematizes the alternatives for ultimate authority to decide and, accepting ultimate decision, obeys. Rusk in his years at the State Department has never seen his role as that of innovator, but far more as that of the agent of consensus, both within his own department and within the administration at large.

In the Kennedy administration, to be sure, this was not a style much valued, though the self-effacement came to exercise a certain appeal for a President who, at bottom, aspired to be his own Secretary of State. Nevertheless, the persistent self-abnegation invited contempt. More than one witness has spoken of the late President's frequently expressed impatience with Rusk. Arthur Schlesinger asserts that Kennedy on the eve of his death had decided to jettison him. Whatever the truth of the story may be, in that ambitious and self-aggrandizing company Rusk could only have been seen as a colorless hack.

"How do you fire a Secretary of State who never does anything, good or bad?" one of Rusk's assistants has rather heartlessly reported the President, perhaps unfairly, as saying. But Rusk, in effect, has himself corroborated the charge of congenital diffidence; his essay on the Presidency vividly describes what must be a personal agony when pushed to the inescapable moment of decision. The President's servant, he says, "must gnaw at his own position"—arresting phrase, as if to gnaw at one's own heart—before he can act. Often in the Kennedy administration Rusk must have felt ill at ease and have hungered to depart—a plain boy, snubbed and mocked for his sober devotion to a man in office who held him cheap.

But in the Johnson administration all this has changed. As the war in Vietnam has eluded settlement on America's terms, as the news breaks the hearts of so many who for so long, with a desperate faith, believed, as the other great councilors have proved faithless or doubters, as fatigue has seized Washington, Rusk's special qualities have come into their own.

In today's Washington, hard intellectual brilliance is at a discount. After the repeated shattering of hopes, the abundant demonstration again and again in recent months that history is ungrateful and, as Lenin once put it, more cunning than us all, mind counts for little. To endure is everything. It is therefore no accident but only a supreme irony that Rusk, so often trampled upon in the internecine wars of two administrations, so often the luckless victim of the ambition and self-aggrandizement of the Defense Department and Central Intelligence Agency, has in the end, no doubt all unwillingly, prevailed.

The self-effacing servant of the Presidency, the compulsive "partner" in power with his colleagues, the voice of the consensus, the man who "lost a brother" when McNamara resigned, has at last emerged as the administration's principal spokesman—in addresses before the public, in a series of carefully staged "off the record" meetings with influential journalists and business leaders, the substance of which invariably "leaks" to the country at large, and, when driven to bay, before the sullen and rebellious Senate Foreign Relations Committee itself.

That he has played his new, and largely thankless, role with a certain gallantry not even his worst detractors could reasonably deny. Doubtless they will continue to do so unreasonably—threatening him with mob violence and hysterically denouncing him, as at the time of his November 1967 address before the Foreign Policy Association in New York. For such critics Rusk is the murderer and butcher in Vietnam—a charge, which if accurate enough in functional terms, must at least, if it is to be made tenable, be adjusted to stress that a potentially well meaning and honorable public servant can sin by a bloody inadvertence. (By a kind of counterescalation *he* has begun to hint darkly that there are sizable and deeply disloyal—Communist—elements at work among the protest groups, as if the deep anxiety of a nation which, in his old words, cannot debate the war "unless the issues are framed for discussion and accompanied by the factual background," stemmed from so superficial a cause.) And just as unreasonably have his purely personal qualities—his tenacity, his stolid refusal to concede past error and to retreat in any degree, for any reason, under fire, as in the March 1968 hearings of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee—won converts to his *intellectual* argument, far beyond that argument's intrinsic worth.

RUSK AT ALL events has emerged as the principal apologist for America's role in the world at a time when few calculating and ambitious men would care to identify their fortunes closely with that policy. Certainly many who made that policy, defining the grandiose role for the previous administration, preparing the way for today's looming tragedies, have gone to extraordinary lengths to dissociate themselves from their past. Yet unlike his colleagues, most of whom have fled the responsibility for Vietnam, the near-wreck of the dollar, the decay of the European alliance, and the suspension of dialogue with the Soviets, Rusk stands his ground. He would, no doubt, do it all again.

It would be tempting, then, to see Rusk merely as an ambitious man who simply lacks his former colleagues' sensitivity to impending disaster, as a man quite unable to grasp the terrible fact of the deterioration of the American world position. But by nearly every evidence of public and private

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testimony, as well as the record of his life style, the reverse is true.

Rusk, more plausibly, is standing by the Presidency, accepting responsibility and, if need be, culpability before history, for a program which, if he did not conceive it, certainly he has executed—faithfully, with increasing energy, and without apparent regret.

ONE MAY doubt, in any case, despite the wracking national debate and the evidence of deep suspicion within his own party, that he is yet aware that he has ever done anything more than superficially wrong. For while Rusk is patently an honorable man, he is not a man of deep sensibility. The origins of the present European resentment against the control America has come to exercise over international monetary operations and Atlantic alliance politics are not likely to be understood by a man who believes such control is intrinsic to the American burden in world affairs—in short, the "responsibility of power." The moral and legal ambiguities of the Vietnamese war are hardly likely to obtrude on a man who cannot distinguish between the xenophobic and anti-colonial sources of Ho Chi Minh's strength and the machinations of a mythical unitary "Asian Communism," who expresses a quasi-priestly view of his duties as the agent of Presidential authority, who cannot understand that a commitment to South Vietnam, a government and people themselves essentially uncommitted, may be honored to the point of existential absurdity, and who extravagantly admires the military (confessing once to Adlai Stevenson that the hardest decision of his life was to resign his colonelcy in 1946).

Nor in any case, despite his reluctance to innovate in policy matters and to act except when the necessity for action has been forced upon him, can it be said, as the late President charged, that he has not acted at all. It can be said, if we scan them, that the major policies he has personally administered or with a certain enthusiasm has allowed to be pursued—chief among them the Bay of Pigs invasion, the Vietnam and Santo Domingo interventions, the attempted military containment of Mainland China, and the effort at the preservation (and augmentation) of what can only be described as a disguised American protectorate over Western Europe—represent, at bottom, a kind of self-consistent program of action.

The common denominator in all of these would appear to be the choice of the solution, or attempted solution, involving the element of force. In Rusk there is a preoccupation with force and military-security issues to the detriment of the political element. And while, in this fallen world, force as an unspoken factor in international politics can never be far beneath the surface of the diplomatic process, it is questionable that Rusk trusts in much else.

Joseph Kraft has written of him: "Out of deference, I think, he allowed powerful associates who had President Kennedy's White House backing to attempt new starts in several areas. In Africa, Assistant Secretary G. Mennen Williams and his deputy Wayne Fredericks were allowed to foster a policy of closer ties between this country and left-wing regimes in Guinea, Algeria, Tanganyika, Ghana, and even the Congo. In Asia, former Assistant Secretaries W. Averell Harriman and Roger Hilsman were permitted to work for a more open door to Mainland China, and to give some American backing to such neutralist figures as Sukarno in Indonesia, Souvanna Phouma in Laos, Sihanouk in Cambodia, and the Buddhist monks in Vietnam. . . . But after the change in the White House reduced Presidential backing for these objectives, Rusk quietly shelved the backers of the new policies and reverted to a more orthodox line. It was certainly not a case of ditching subordinates who had once had his support. He had never really supported them in the first place."

And indeed it is not really at issue whether all these policies of his subordinates were well conceived. What one suspects is that they never caught Rusk's imagination or, for that matter, serious attention at all.

For paradoxically Rusk, who has figured as his country's chief diplomatic officer—as the chief instrument of the Presidency in the conduct of foreign affairs—seems not to have a taste for diplomacy at all. His liking, on the contrary, has been for solutions which have the charm of offering a specious certainty—alliance with deferential and *reliable* governments, regional security achieved through an *American* presence and a distinct *subordination* of the allies, a fancied political and social stability in underdeveloped areas achieved through a solid *military* capability.

Though he has never lapsed into the old Calvinist rhetoric of his predecessor, John Foster Dulles, invoking the ultimately theological image of a world poised between political evil and political good, Rusk has never been anything but essentially uncomplicated in his vision of the world. For political neutrals he has had little use, even though his distaste for them seems based more on pragmatic argument—their unreliability—than, as with Dulles, on purely moral mistrust. If he has been willing, though not eager, to contemplate sweeping security and anti-nuclear agreements with the Soviets, it is because he has sensed in the Soviets a kindred superpower with parallel interests to America's own—in contradistinction to the volatile and disorder-provoking nations in the world, a category which includes, one suspects, Rumania and Czechosolovakia which challenge Soviet hegemony (and, thereby, a fancied regional stability) as much as Cuba or France.

Rusk in any case, though he is hardly fond of the Soviets, has never, it would appear, been as anti-Soviet as he has been anti-Chinese; he is not really Europe-oriented. His wartime experience

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was in the Asian theater; his chief post in the State Department in his early years was as Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs. Despite his Rhodes scholarship long ago, his imagination is dominated by Asia. Indeed, as we have seen, his one encounter with notoriety in his early career was in 1951—his gaffe, in the midst of the Korean War, when he called for a new policy of fomenting rebellion on the mainland. Rusk, wedded to the notion of reliability and order, has opposed the Chinese Communist upstarts from the beginning—a tenable position, no doubt, but one in Rusk's case based on no clear insight into the nature of his enemy. For the Chinese Communists, Rusk contended publicly in those years, were not Chinese at all. As mere fancied puppets of Stalin they did not, as he put it, meet the first test of national sovereignty. The plain evidence of their independence since has not caused him to alter his attitude. Nor does he seem aware of the distinction between the largely rhetorical violence displayed by Peking and its more cautious record of action. Rusk repeatedly conjures up the vision of a thermonuclear China threatening, if necessary, ultimate war on the world—when Peking has not ever seriously attempted the liberation of the offshore islands of Quemoy and Matsu. The truth is that Rusk, despite the matter-of-fact personal style, is like the majority of Americans—not quite the pragamatist through and through. Rusk is given to apocalyptic imaginings more often than the plain exterior would suggest.

To his friends Rusk may be an engaging personality and to his colleagues and subordinates an administrator self-effacing to the point of pathology. But he is a man of his nation at this point in history and in his public discourse there has been a consistent element of curious pugnacity—to use his own favorite phrase, a "low-key" pugnacity. That this is so is not gainsaid by the parallel truth that Rusk, with apparent total sincerity, has said again and again that his, and America's, goal abroad is nothing less than universal democracy—a "victory for all mankind . . . a worldwide victory for freedom."

In his commitment to the notion of world order based on world law, Rusk sometimes approaches the point of obsession. Again and again, he has cited the vaporous and banal Preamble and first two Articles of the United Nations Charter as expressing the nation's whole foreign purpose: "*We the people of the United Nations* determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and to reaffirm faith . . . in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women, of nations large and small . . . *and for these ends* to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbors . . . *have resolved to combine our efforts to accomplish these aims.*"

"The central problem before the human race, Mr. Chairman, is how to organize peace in the world," he testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in March 1968. "Back in 1945 there was a long, hard discussion of that subject. . . . And the prescription for organizing the peace was written into Article I of the UN Charter.

"It makes clear that acts of aggression and breaches of the peace have to be suppressed, that disputes ought to be settled by peaceful means, that the basic human rights ought to be sustained, and that governments must cooperate across their frontiers in the great humanitarian purposes of all mankind."

But the real problem with Rusk is that not even in his joining of idealism to pugnacity does he depart much from being the embodiment of the consensus—the Conventional Wisdom. The nearer truth would seem to be that in his words, and in his works, Rusk expresses an ideology of international action, a consistent worldview, that is very close to being the common denominator of every American administration since 1945. The differences in style have been immense—but only of style—from the apparently reluctant interventionism of the Truman years when practical limitations of power held the nation in check, through the proliferation of alliances and commitments in the Middle East, Latin America, and Southeast Asia of the Eisenhower years, to the self-consciously assured global interventionism, one might almost say grandiosity, of the Kennedy and Johnson era in which Rusk has served. Yet the consistent strain, latent or manifest, has been there—the belief in the practice of international politics as a preeminently moral undertaking, the belief in the high mission to which America has been called, the belief in simple dichotomies between right and wrong, and finally the curious belief that informs the rhetoric of all four administrations that America's confrontation with the world represents an ultimate drama. At last succeeding in its purpose, America will bring the congenital political disorder of the world (for which read history) to a stop.

It is only today—as America is increasingly rejected abroad and balked in its purposes by the very ones we attempt to save—that the rhetoric of messianism begins to ring false. Thus, if Rusk now is unconvincing in his argumentation, it is not that he has departed in substance from what his predecessors have said; only the setting is changed. There is a new sense of malaise and failure.

Announcing in 1947 the new American doctrine of containment—a doctrine conceived by its professional authors as the limited containment of *Soviet* power—the American President, even then, could invoke the language of world dichotomy: "At the present moment in world history every nation must choose alternative ways of life," Harry Truman asserted. "One way of life is based

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upon the will of the majority, and is distinguished by free institutions. The second way of life is based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed." Faced with this challenge, the President continued, "it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures" everywhere.

IN THE Truman years the penchant for universal crusade was held in check by material limitations—the American nuclear stockpile was small and the conventional strength of our enemies, the Soviets and the Chinese, intimidating. In the Eisenhower years the activism latent in American foreign policy, certainly as conceived and expressed by John Foster Dulles, was held in check by the congenital caution, one might say *immobilisme*, of King Log. America in those years shied off from dangerous confrontations, *vide* the collapse of the myth of rollback in Hungary in 1956 and the mock intervention in Lebanon in 1958 instead of the far riskier project of an invasion of Iraq, to restore the regime of our client Nuri-es-Said overthrown by forces then widely regarded as Communist-controlled. But this characterological caution displayed by the Presidency in Eisenhower's time did not prevent the reckless proliferation of America's symbolic—treaty—commitments, a process fraught with ultimate and bloody consequences, as we now see in Vietnam.

And in the Kennedy years, King Log was supplanted, as in the old fable, by King Stork. History may well record, alas, that there has been no administration so forward in style as the Kennedy administration—assiduous in its cultivation of the *techniques* of "crisis management" and controlled war, yet acting within an intellectual context of wholly unanalyzed assumptions about the American calling in history, the possibilities of international diplomacy, and the limits of political action in a determinedly resisting world.

For while the entry of the United States into global politics after World War II was generally defensive in intent—the result of genuine anxieties about the nature of Soviet intentions and a change of policy not achieved without a wracking domestic debate on the American responsibility —it has developed in extraordinarily activist and abrasive style. To lead the world, it would seem, is a heady business, even for the initially reluctant. And it is a corrupting business too: until the bloody settlement day that Vietnam represents, one may suspect that Rusk, and America, had come to prize the burdens they once abhorred.

Rusk, at bottom, is not very different from the archetypal American acting in the world arena. He is meliorist, liberalist, and moralist—and sometimes perilously close to being a Pharisee. The alternative of force comes easily to him when the nation's purposes are balked; he is impatient of complexity abroad. In short, however much he would deny it, he is heir to the Wilsonian tradition—that style of diplomacy that began in office proclaiming the New Freedom and the obsolescence of force in human affairs but came to bombard and occupy Vera Cruz in 1914 and subsequently sanctioned military interventions in Haiti, Santo Domingo, Nicaragua, and northern Mexico. ("I am going to teach the South American republics to elect good men," said Woodrow Wilson, all unconscious of irony, to a visitor in 1914.) Ultimately it was Wilson's effect to convert the First World War, initially a European dynastic and commercial carnage, into a war for the unattainable goals of universal peace and justice, so that after America intervened in 1917 no practical compromise was possible between the European combatants, who fought on to ultimate ruin.

The folly of Wilsonian—illusionist—diplomacy is a central dogma of the Conventional Wisdom today; but criticisms of the Wilsonian tradition commonly function in the past tense only. It is a style endemic to Americans and, suitably altered or tricked out in new rhetorical finery, it surfaces time and again.

It has escaped general notice today that the "war to end all war," that black joke of the Wilson era, has emerged once more in our day as the war to end insurgencies—to end, in the new ideological phraseology, "national liberation wars" for all time.

When Rusk asserts that America's goal is a "victory for all mankind . . . a worldwide victory for freedom," he is truer than his critics know to his nation's past—and to their own fundamental beliefs as well. His taste for teleological politics, and by extension his taste for wars that are justifiable in historicist terms, are hardly foreign to his critics. For as he has put it, accurately enough, the "distant stars" of American policy are "the notion articulated by Thomas Jefferson that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed. . . . It just happens to be that the American people believe it and are deeply dedicated to the notion."

Such a doctrine, argues Rusk, demands of Americans that they strive for its realization not only in America, but in the wider world. And few Americans would quarrel with the notion that these ideals, at least as expressed if not as practiced, are universal in their relevancy and that it has been the American duty to fight, as Rusk has put it, for "a world of independent nations, each with their own institutions, settling their disputes by peaceful means, banding together to resist aggression, striving to establish a rule of law."

It is only the practical consequences of this doctrine, and then only in Vietnam, that the majority of Americans deplore today. It is only that the American involvement has gone, in unpredictable ways, so bloodily wrong. That is why, as in the March 1968 hearings before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, so often the angry critics

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fell silent, finding their charges refuted by an opposing argument on the rightness of the American commitment whose fundamental tenets they could not oppose. Even Senator Robert Kennedy, opening battle for the Presidency with the Johnson administration on the specific issue of Vietnam, could do no other than end his declaration of candidacy with a call to reassert "Our right to the moral leadership of this planet."

IT IS HARDLY a caricature of shared and deeply felt American beliefs to say that the critics of Rusk and the Johnson administration—in Congress, in the press, and now in the developing political campaign—have all, until very recently at least, believed that this is America's hour in history, that this generation of Americans has been matched to a great test whose outcome will shape the future of mankind. It is only that in Vietnam the war has become unaccountably complex and savage, that the dollar shudders under the strain, and that the resources of the nation, as much intellectual as fiscal, have proved inadequate to deal simultaneously with a foreign war and the deterioration of society at home. It is only that the nation has found that to choose enemies means inevitably that we have chosen allies—and too often the kind of allies that Americans, with their easy moralisms, find difficult to stomach. For this was the seductive charm of the old isolationism, its superiority over the new globalism—that America, in the old view, would regenerate the world by example, not action. In the old isolationist view, America would keep clean hands—practicing a morality that, in Péguy's phrase, had clean hands because it had no hands.

The new globalism is the old isolationist spirit inverted: the messianic fervor is there as is the sense of American particularism and ethical superiority. Only the style has become activist—while the intellectual content remains the same. The old isolationism sought a retreat from the world; the new globalism would make the world homogeneous with us. That is all.

But activism implies involvement in history—in the harrowing and repetitive tragedies of life. For a nation to act in the world arena is to invite being caught up in corruption and violence, because it is simply not true that a politics can be practiced in the world that is merely an antiseptic politics of development aid, Peace Corps missions, and identifying with "progressive" forces everywhere. To act in the world may be inevitable but it is to enter into the dirty and real business of life—and that too is why it needs to be done with restraint. The grandiose expectations of history, which are the American consensus, are fundamentally in error. Action wedded to millennarian political beliefs is a potentially explosive force in the world and can only produce in the end a 20th-century version of religious war.

For Rusk, and the America he has spoken for, are only superficially realist in their foreign politics. The America that confronted the Cold War in the early postwar years undertook a profound alteration of national style—but only of style. The self-conscious realism of the Conventional Wisdom thereafter asserted that no nation could expect to exercise world power in an enterprise of surpassing importance without meeting resistance and resentment. For us, the true question was to have been not whether we were "loved" today, but whether future generations would judge us right. We were to appeal to the future to vindicate us and to conclude in the end that by having fought aggression in Vietnam, by organizing resistance to Communism in Thailand and Laos, by supporting the forces of freedom in Indonesia, Iran, and India, by struggling for the unification of Europe and the Atlantic Community, by suppressing the revolutions of Latin America while organizing its economic development and social transformation, we had made a better world.

Many will argue the specific terms of American foreign policy belief. Many, surely, will insist that the problem of social oppression and economic deprivation far outweighs the military threat of Communism. For them the issue will be to dam back Communism by "building nations," by reforming the society of those of our allies threatened from within and without. Others will hold that it is the military and subversive danger that is primary. For them the necessity will be the continuity and order of the present society and government. But the structure of belief is essentially unitary: few Americans, five years ago, denied the need for some military assistance to a government like that of South Vietnam, and few even of the military-minded today would deny the need for an American effort to root out corruption and bring about "reform." If we are fair we will admit that from the moderate Left to the moderate Right of American politics few people would, until the disasters came, have dissented from the program and beliefs that Dean Rusk asserts today.

Beyond Vietnam there is not even the practical qualification—the forced realization that it has all gone terribly and unaccountably wrong. Where the potentially tragic consequences of American policies are not yet manifest—as in Europe or in Latin America—the American consensus continues essentially as before.

Americans, it would seem, are not yet ready for a limited politics abroad. They are not yet ready to cool the heated rhetoric of purposive politics that invokes the ultimately theological imagery of worldwide struggle and the grand drama of the Last Days. Nor would it seem that Americans, for all the shattering of hopes, are yet ready to see themselves in the continuity of history—a great nation surely, but one sublunary in its talents and possibilities.

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The Madmen of Sighet
A Story

Elie Wiesel

THIS STORY is about madmen. I tell it because I like stories, and because I like madmen. Besides, the story takes place in Sighet, the town where I was born—and that, won't you agree, is reason enough. To be truthful, I should say that I had thought there was nothing left for me in Sighet. But I was wrong. Banished once from its borders, I find my roots there are struck deeply still; the greater the distance I place between myself and Sighet, the more profoundly do I find myself entwined. I know this seems incomprehensible, but I shrink from comprehending it.

Twenty years after having left Sighet, I returned for a single day, for a solitary glance, without knowing exactly what I was looking for; I still don't know, but I fear to attain such knowledge. Perhaps I was drawn there by the child that I had been—the child I left behind as a kind of pledge, as a watchman. Until my return I had no way of knowing that madmen had got hold of that child, that, like Sighet itself, he had become their prisoner.

The fact that I now come back to Sighet again, though all unwillingly, may be taken as further evidence that I belong to a generation which is concerned more with the past than with the future. For us, that which will be has already been. The Messiah has been and gone, slipping fearfully away from the house in flames, and dispersing the night behind him. Now, starved for recollection, the ageless elders of the town stir their memory to relive one hour of their old nocturnal life, that hour when the hands of the clock point forever to midnight. In my own memory a child awaits me but I am afraid to follow him, for I know that of the two of us, one has died. Yet I know too that he and he alone can lead me to his masters, to those men, sunk in gloomy bereavement, who sit at the crossroads, silent and invisible, judging the passersby.

Three years ago I wrote about my return to Sighet.* With the exception of my encounter with the madmen—an omission at once unexplained and inexplicable—I told the story then in its entirety, and it seems to me that I did not forget any details. I described how unreal it was to me, wandering about in my old neighborhood; how I found my way into my childhood, to my home; how by the porch, in the courtyard, a dog howled as if to chase away returning spirits. I walked for hours, from street to street, from memory to memory; I wished someone would finally come to wake me, to ask me what it was I wanted to do, and with whom and for how long. No one recognized me, and I didn't recognize anyone.

As I wrote, I also recalled my surprise at not finding the old synagogue that used to stand in the narrow street close to the town square. In other years, that synagogue had caused the hearts of the superstitious, old and young alike, to quake in fear. They used to say then that after midnight the dead would gather in the synagogue to pray. But the synagogue was set aflame by the Germans; it became an unseen Temple of fire, and so I missed it. Had it still been standing, it would have revived in me that fear for which I hungered, as a field at night hungers for dew.

Also I told about my impressions of the cemetery, which once in my childhood I had been forbidden to visit. Now its great black gate lay open before me. The watchmen had gone elsewhere to die; their grave lay somewhere in heaven, and their names were inscribed on the name of God.

Not a word did I leave out of my account, except for my visit with the three madmen, in the insane asylum. These madmen were the last survivors of a community that had disappeared, the only ones to have escaped deportation. Everywhere else, the insane had been made to leave in the first convoys; it seems that the Germans, perhaps afraid of them more than of the others, took care to be rid of them first. And even in Sighet, our free and independent madmen—like Moshe the Cantor, Shmukler the Prince, Lazar the Fat, along with some other God-intoxicated dreamers—were placed at the very head of the convoy, to serve as trailblazers for the rest of the condemned. But those who had been already institutionalized remained miraculously untouched. I decided to visit them.

The route was a familiar one. In other days,

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* "The Last Return," COMMENTARY, March 1965—ED.

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with my sisters and friends, I used to come here on Sabbath afternoons, especially in the summer, to bring fruit and candy to the Jewish inmates. The place had not changed; it still gave off the same air of disquieting calm, of exaggerated propriety. Surrounded by a high wall, it seemed impervious to time.

THE DOCTORS received me affably. One of them, assuming the role of the host, accompanied me on a tour of the various floors. We walked through the male ward, the female ward, the reception hall, the ward for special cases. The equipment was modern, the staff professional.

"Do you know the three men?"

"Possibly. If you could tell me their names. . . ."

I'd never heard them before.

"Maybe if you see them. . . . "

He pointed them out. They were in a badly lit room: two men, wild and haggard, their lips shining and dehydrated, and a third man, younger, about my age. I didn't recognize them.

"Maybe if you spoke to them. . . . "

I greeted them. The two older men seemed happy to see me and not at all surprised.

"It's good of you to come. We were waiting for you."

"What?" I was taken aback. "You knew I was coming?"

"Naturally. Today is Saturday."

Palms outstretched, they demanded their due: gifts for the Sabbath.

I blushed. "I'm sorry, forgive me, I didn't bring you anything. Forgive me, but today's Thursday."

I explained to them that Saturday was no longer the holiest day of the week, but a day like all other days; that the sanctity of the Sabbath had vanished. "Forgive me," I said, "but the Sabbath Queen has gone and won't come back right away. Forgive me, but it's the fault of the King."

They listened politely, all the time winking at me like conspirators to a mutual transgression. I fell silent and they burst into loud laughter. Then the younger one, the third one, pulled me off into a corner and whispered in my ear: "Poor things. They've lost their minds." And in a voice still lower: "I feel sorry for them. They think the world out there's the same as it used to be." And he too winked at me.

The old ones were convulsed with laughter. Louder and louder they laughed, but their faces belied their merriment; their faces, which had a hunted look, submerged in shadow, denied the possibility of laughter. They held their position for a moment that seemed an eternity, then gathered themselves together, exhausted as if from a wrestling bout. Stretched out on the rough wooden floor, they stared fixedly ahead, somewhere far away, toward the emptiness within.

WITH THE doctor's permission I invited the youngest of the three for a walk in the garden. The leaves were turning yellow and the weather was pleasant. Autumn in Sighet is suffused with a delicate sadness, with inexpressible nostalgia. Spring by contrast is arbitrary and imposing, arrogant and without patience, whereas autumn lingers on and departs against its will, while all of nature attempts to retain it.

"Do you hear the wind?" my companion asked. "It is driving out the fall. I speak to it; it doesn't listen."

A light breeze, barely perceptible, ruffled the two streams that flow around my town. I felt it in my hair, on my eyelids. But instead of calming me it induced rather a feeling of discomfort.

"Do you see the wind?" he went on. "It sees me. Sometimes I deposit my gaze in the wind, and it comes back to me brimming with sunshine and freshness. Occasionally I get back a look that is not my own and then I see things, I see things. . . . "

I let him go on, wondering what it was he suffered from, whether he had known my parents, whether he had heard about the deportations. I couldn't ask him such questions. But he sensed my confusion and came to my aid.

"You must want to know why they hold me here. It's simple: I'm sick. Not hopelessly, not like the others, but sick all the same."

He smiled, his tone becoming indulgent and full of condescension like one who knows something about his interlocutor which his interlocutor has failed to realize about himself. "I'm sick. Crazy. Yes, I say so myself. Don't look at me like that. A madman is talking to you. There's a madman standing with you here, a madman who's aware of his condition and who therefore suffers all the more."

There was a sharp cry behind me. I turned around, trembling with fright. It came from the violent ward, where the windows were shut tight. A cry of distress? Of sudden lucidity? Who was it?

"That's Miklos," my companion said. "He's afraid of the dusk, as afraid of the dusk as he is of death; maybe more. He starts shouting as soon as this time of day comes around. He's the first to notice it."

"But it's still early."

"Not for Miklos. Not for poor benighted Miklos."

I listened carefully, but the cry hung on the air and was not repeated.

"To shut him up they stuff his mouth with rags," my young friend explained.

Near one of the open windows I discerned—or so it seemed to me—the two old ones; their

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laughter, frozen and shocking, reached me at irregular intervals.

"A strange place. Some laugh, others cry out, but it's all the same. And then there's me. What's *my* role in all of this? I'm the one who listens, I'm the one who takes pity, the one who sees without looking and who looks without believing."

His BREATHING became heavier. We sat down on a bench beneath an apple tree. A shadow, thrown off from a distant mountain, insinuated itself into the clouds above, and in among the branches and leaves that were so near. Engrossed in his thoughts, the young man twisted his fingers around his neck, then untwisted them. After a period of silence I heard his voice in my ear, different now, yet stunningly familiar. He was describing his illness, the nightmares that pursued him, the visions from which he could not free himself.

"Imagine the unimaginable," he said, looking straight into my eyes as if seeking a reflection which he alone could decipher. "Imagine that I envision the town of Sighet bereft of its Jews. No, you're right to suspect me. What seems to you inconceivable, I can see as clearly as you see me. Do you understand? Sighet—that living, vibrating town; that town with the Jewish soul; that most flourishing, that most Jewish of towns from the Tissa to the Danube. Now, think. Think that in the eye of my imagination I see it fallen from glory, absurdly impoverished, degenerate, empty of Jews. So—within the space of a day, voided of everything that gave it radiance, everything that illuminated Sighet in its beauty and, more than that, in its misery. The prayer rooms are abandoned, the holy places desecrated, gutted. I grope for a spark, for a sign of life. I find: nothing. I run to the *heder*; no one is there, not a teacher, not a student. In the synagogues the holy books tatter and mildew beneath layers of dust. Where are the Hasidim, where their opponents? Where are the tailors and doctors, the wedding orchestras and the brides, where are the poor, where the stern householders? I know they're there, I can feel their presence. But they have stolen out of my line of vision, enveloped in a cloak of withdrawal. And this applies only to the living. Now I see the houses—my glance falls upon the signs, upon the streets, on the thinnest of cracks in the walls. These I see. Only these do I see. I know that what I say comes of disease, out of a warped imagination, *my* imagination. I know all this, I tell it to myself over and over the livelong day. I'm not so crazy as to suppose that my visions pertain to a reality other than what I carry within me, to an actual, to a true reality, to an objective reality, to the real world. I know that all this applies only to myself, not to Sighet. In normal life the imagination serves to reveal what the night conceals; with me the opposite is true. And that proves that I'm the one who is sick. I don't deny it. Except—at times I lose courage, my spirit falls. What would you expect? I am desperate, but not wholly so. In the depths of my despair, at the edge of complete insanity, I retrieve my conviction that in the last analysis I am the victim of a *dybbuk*. My trouble is that I'm the only one who suffers, while Sighet goes on, truly real, with its Jews, its legends, its songs, its festival days. But without me, outside me.

"Can you understand what I myself cannot?" He was gesticulating now. "I am the village madman, shouting from the rooftops that they've stolen his village. I am the dead man, accusing life of having stolen his cemetery. I cry out from the depths of my vision and all the time I know it's not true, that I'm a false prophet, seized of a *dybbuk*, wildly hallucinating, a man not to be taken seriously. Now you, for example, you who come from the outside—you have already ascertained how baseless my maunderings are, how utterly without foundation. At this hour the sun is setting in Sighet, and in the prayer house, in the school, in the period of time between *minha* and *maariv*, the Hasidim are telling stories of the miracles performed by their rabbis. In the Jews' Street, in the great square, the porters are laying down their burdens and turning toward the wall to pray, so that Mendel the Redhead can recite Kaddish. In the Yeshiva the candles have been lit and the students turn their attention to a difficult verse, a complicated passage in the *Tosaphot*. Standing before the rabbi, two merchants discuss a difference of opinion, placing their trust in his judgment. I recognize the rabbi. I recognize the Yeshiva students, their singsong dwells within me. The porters are my friends; their burden is my shame, their moments of tranquility my gladness. I hear them, all of them, I hear their footsteps in the night, I recognize even their breathing, I sense them within range of my hands. But if this is so, what is the significance of these idle dreams, these attacks of anguish that disturb my sleep and leave me covered with sweat?"

His gaze burned with a somber light, transfixing my own. I felt adrift, alone in an unforgiving forest. My senses sharpened to the point of pain, I saw the sun slip over the other side of the mountain. Twilight embraced the twinkling cottages, blocks of fir trees closed in on the precipitous roads. A drawn out, heart-piercing cry—Miklos?—was followed immediately by the laughter of the two old men.

"Poor things. Their fate is sealed. But me? Tell me—for me it's still not too late, is it? I can still hope, can't I?"

I nodded my head, unsure if the answer were yes or no. The doctor had assured me beforehand that this young man was not a violent sort,

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that I had nothing to fear. He would not kill me, or strike me, or fall upon me. And yet, I sensed obscurely now the proximity of danger. It was time to leave. The hour was already late, too late.

"What shall I do?" he yelled breathlessly. "The forest is too dense, I can't find my way. The wind has covered the path with sand. Those two old men think the world hasn't changed—that is their sickness. I on the other hand see my town as a stranger, as if it were no longer even the cemetery where yesterday's world and tomorrow's humanity have been buried. And that's my sickness."

His face had begun to fade into the approaching night. He drew near, his forehead almost touching mine.

"You, who have come from afar, help me, advise me, give me the word that will snatch me from the hell I have invented."

He was silent a moment, then went on in a whisper. "If the truth leads to madness, and if falsehood does the same, what more can we do? How can God justify Himself in His own eyes? If actuality and imagination lead to the same crying out, to the same laughter, then what is the purpose, what is the point of creation? What is a man to do on this mysterious earth?"

His speech had become more rapid. I wanted to stop him before it became too late—for me no less than for him. His questions had struck a chord, yet they were too deep for me; I could not provide the key to these riddles. There was a moment when I felt the desire to seize upon one of the pauses in his recital to tell him the truth: I have come from town and I am able to testify that your visions are true, that they are based on fact, and that the wildest estimations of the two old men are also true. Sighet is Sighet, as it always was, but Sighet is no longer Sighet; in remaining true to what it was, it has denied itself. A phantom city, it has remained alive only in the memory of the dead, only in the daydreams of the mad. That is what I desired to tell him. But my lips refused to move, the sentences to form. The words would not come. I had abandoned them beyond the wall.

"For years," he said, "I used to accompany the doctor on his trips into town. He was undoubtedly trying to cure me by confronting me with the city. A complete failure. My sickness pursued me, my visions ran ahead of me. Jews' Street, which used to be a noisy place of business, now had a new name; strangers walked in it, up and down. Those pilgrimages of mine were a source of new disappointment. Life went on but I had ben pushed aside, and the faces and the destinies that had peopled my past were no longer to be found. I'm sure you won't believe me, but it seemed to me that I saw strangers in my house —in my own house, at my parents' table. It reached the point where I began to ask myself whether I myself were not the agent of this change, this reversal; it reached the point where I began to think of myself as an angel of death, leaving in my wake a swath of emptiness all around. . . . I know this is all nothing but a nightmare. It's all a misapprehension, I know that. I'm a victim, a victim of my eyes, my ears, of my heart, and my memory. I know the truth lies elsewhere, in some other place, that the truth is other. And I know that you—you who come from afar—know this better than I. Tell me that you know, I have to believe in you. . . . "

As he spoke he began to sway from side to side, humming quietly, like that child of other days who swayed and hummed as he dreamed of his destiny, dreamed of mastering the future through the power of prayer and study. Suddenly I felt the danger imminent. I sprang up from the bench and without a word or a gesture of farewell, without explanation or even regret, I began to run from him, out of his line of vision, out of the courtyard and away from the asylum, toward the street, the city, toward life. And after me came the moans of Miklos, came the laughter of the old men and the voice of the young one—the one who appeared to be my own age. I don't know how long I ran or why, only that deep inside me, in the center of my being, I dreaded to meet again the person who at the end of the course, at the limits of fear, was already there, waiting for me.

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Relevance in the Synagogue

Milton Himmelfarb

EVERYONE, especially the young, seems to agree that the synagogue is irrelevant. When Jewish college students (and youthful or wishfully youthful college teachers) are asked whether the synagogue is relevant, they answer no. In all that interests them—peace, race, poverty, the meaning of morality, freedom—the synagogue says and does little that seems to them useful or important. It isn't unexpected that they should say this. Most of them are uncommitted or, as they are sometimes called, unJewish.

What may be unexpected is that even those young people who consider themselves to be committed Jews are apt to say the same thing. In effect, they say they are committed Jews, synagogue Jews, not because of the synagogue but in spite of it. They are disappointed when they turn to it for encouragement, help, or advice in those things that to them are most important—which aren't greatly different from the important things of the uncommitted. Members of a self-conscious youth generation tend to have similar ideas about what is important; and particularly now, when you don't have to be young to be convinced of the importance of peace, race, poverty and the rest.

There is a certain ambiguity in this criticism of the synagogue. Are the young people saying that the synagogue is as irrelevant as the church, or that it is more irrelevant? If the critics wanted to, they could argue, plausibly, that the synagogue is more irrelevant. They could point to the far-out nuns and priests, the new-morality and secular-city theologians, the community activism of the mainline Protestant denominations, the traditional peace and service activities of the Quakers. In image, at least, and probably also to some extent in deed, the synagogue is substantially to the rear of the churches in these matters. Yet the critics of the synagogue generally avoid the comparison. I think they avoid it because they want to make believe that a big, obvious fact doesn't exist: that America, though it is a secular society and has more separation of church and state than practically any other country in the world, is also a Christian society. I shall come back to this later.

Provisionally, let us regard the criticism of the synagogue as a criticism of religion generally—that is, one which assumes an equal unsatisfactoriness of church and synagogue. What is new about this is that it is made at all. Criticism arises from expectation. In the *entre deux guerres,* enlightened, progressive people didn't make the criticism. They didn't have the expectation. They simply took it for granted that religion was so thoroughly stupid and out of the question that it needn't be thought about at all. We all say and believe that the world is more secular than it has ever been. Simultaneously, enlightened, progressive people are more disillusioned with irreligion and more expectant of religion than they have ever been. If a New Leftist can bring himself to think of coalition at all, he will include not the trade unions but the churches.

As for the synagogue, it may be less relevant than it used to be, but I'm not sure. The social-justice phase of Reform Judaism in the 1930's seems to have been chiefly a matter of resolutions by the Central Conference of American Rabbis and of a certain idea that the Reform rabbinate, or part of it, had of itself. It doesn't seem to have had much effect on the Jewish consciousness, let alone on the social reality. Looking back, some are inclined to think social justice was emphasized then not only because that was what America was thinking about but also to help the rabbis feel they weren't superfluous. A friend of mine, ordained at a Reform seminary in the 1950's, has told me that a professor once explained to his students: "In those days we had rabbis of two sorts: there were the social-justice ones, and then there were the ones who knew Hebrew." (My friend speaks Hebrew with his children; and he was jailed in the South when jail wasn't yet fashionable.)

AS IT HAPPENS, the synagogue did have serious and important things to say then to Jews about social questions, but those were Jewish—notably anti-Semitism. We are thankful to have fewer such problems now, but we still have some: anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union and Poland, the incomplete disappearance of anti-Semitism in the United States, the curious rise of an anti-Semitism on the American Left. About these, most young Jews aren't greatly concerned. They are likely to deny, impatiently, that such things exist. That is all so parochial, they say; so limited, so—so Jewy.

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I HAVE READ to Jewish college students poems by LeRoi Jones which *mutatis mutandis* are Nazi, and have asked the students what they think. They look at me with bewilderment and incomprehension. What am I talking about? Why do I want to talk about anti-Semitism? What has it to do with them? Besides, Jones isn't really an anti-Semite. If he hates Jews who exploit, they deserve to be hated.

It is as though Hitler were no more recent than Haman.

For a universalist, anti-Semitism isn't an important problem. There are few Jews in the world, and a universalist will worry about the problems of the many. Yet if you're a Jew, anti-Semitism can kill you though you're also a universalist. It killed Jewish universalists on the other side of the ocean in the other half of the century. If you think anti-Semitism unworthy of your notice, think again.

Much has changed, but here little has changed. Thirty years ago the fathers and uncles of the young critics were equally impatient. For them, anti-Semitism was a symptom, a by-product, of capitalism. To abolish anti-Semitism, you had first to abolish capitalism. You had first to institute socialism. Anti-Semitism was rampant in Germany, where capitalism had attained its pure or ultimate form of Nazism, and in the United States. In the Soviet Union anti-Semitism had been uprooted and had disappeared. Worrying about anti-Semitism only distracted you from what was really needed, the struggle against capitalism.

As we can see now, that reasoning wasn't exactly scientific. It proceeded from essence, or from definition: capitalism was wicked, producing wicked things, and socialism was good, producing good things. The logic was scholastic—decadent scholastic at that, not greatly different from the logic of decadent scholastic medicine that Molière allows us to overhear: *Quare opium facit dormire? —Quia habet quandam virtutem dormitivam. —Optime!* Why does opium make people sleep? —Because it has a certain power that causes sleep.—Very good!

Today in the United States students wonder what you're talking about when you talk about anti-Semitism, but in the Soviet Union and Poland they know. In capitalist-Nazi Germany 600,000 Jews were held to be at the same time Bolsheviks and bankers, assuming those roles in a fearsome Jewish conspiracy to subvert the German nation and the Aryan race. In socialist-Marxist Poland 25,000 Jews are held to be at the same time Zionists, cosmopolitans, and Stalinists, assuming those roles in a fearsome Jewish conspiracy to subvert the Polish nation and its socialist order.

So the synagogue didn't talk too much about anti-Semitism (Nazi and fascist) then. Maybe it isn't talking enough about anti-Semitism (Soviet and leftist, and generally contemporary) now. But that is hardly the sort of thing that universalist critics normally mean by relevance.

Actually, are the critics saying that they're perplexed, that they don't know what to think or do about peace, race, poverty, and that they want the synagogue to advise and lead them? Not usually. They are saying that the synagogue should tell them what they want to hear, that it should support and strengthen them in what they are already doing. And they want the synagogue to transmit the truths understood by the enlightened to its members, so deficient in enlightenment.

A year or two ago I heard a scholar describe the typical sermon in an up-to-date American synagogue as the rabbi's review of a best-seller. He didn't know what he was talking about, probably not having been in a synagogue in thirty years. The book-review sermon isn't typical any more. When it was typical, that was because rabbi and congregation wanted to be relevant.

Can there be any similarity between social-action deeds and sermons, on the one hand, and popular book reviews, on the other? It may be said that popular book reviews are only an expression of what religionists themselves, especially such Christian theologians as H. Richard Niebuhr, condemn as culture religion (the anthropologists' culture, not Matthew Arnold's). Such religion, whatever it may call itself, is a tribal idolatry, echoing the prejudices and self-love of the secular community, whereas the duty of true religion is to stand apart and judge. Those who agree that book-review sermons were out of place in the 30's but insist that social-action sermons are needed in the 60's would transpose to the sphere of society and politics the distinction often made in literature and art between high culture (Arnold's) and popular culture: book-review sermons are bad, belonging to popular culture; social-action sermons are good, belonging to high social thought.

But escape isn't that easy. Lionel Trilling has shown us how blurred the old distinctions have become. In the old days high culture was for the happy few, and the man who adhered to high culture could realistically see himself as set apart from the vulgar. That is no longer so. The adversary culture, as Trilling calls it, is now as established as what used to be the official, established culture: in that *New Yorker* cartoon the artist's girlfriend asks him, "Why must you be a nonconformist like everyone else?" Niebuhr's judgment can apply equally to religion that affirms what used to be the established culture and to religion that affirms what used to be the adversary culture; equally to religion that affirms popular politics and to religion that affirms adversary politics.

With Jews, what's more, adversary has long been

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as popular as popular. Fifteen years ago how much courage did a rabbi really need, or how much distinctive moral leadership did he exercise, when he criticized Senator Joseph McCarthy to his congregation? This year how much courage does he need, and how much leadership does he exercise, when he praises Senator Eugene McCarthy?

THE ADVICE TO BE relevant comes most vocally from students and teachers. From them, is it good advice? Professor Leonard J. Fein of M.I.T. has written (*Judaism,* Winter 1968):

> Around the country, rabbinic groups and individual rabbis have spoken and speak vigorously on social issues. I applaud their vigor. I believe the community cries out for that sort of leadership. But . . . I do not believe that the image of the rabbi as a social-protest activist or as a literary critic is going to inspire either the students or the academic community. The rabbi, as he moves from his specific field of competence —which was, of course, always . . . Torah . . .— becomes a dilettante. . . . He must be *au courant* with literature, politics, psychology, sociology, history, anthropology . . . and necessarily dilettantish.
>
> A sermon on Black Power . . . may be all the information a rabbi's congregants will get . . . and therefore he is obliged to give it. . . . If a student of mine came to me to find out about Black Power, I would either send him up to Tom Pettigrew at Harvard or I would urge him to take my seminar on race in America.
>
> . . . the rabbi, in ministering to the needs of the pants manufacturers, is boring the academic. If he were to minister to the needs of the academic, he would violate his responsibility to the pants manufacturers. That is what makes this a dilemma. . . .
>
> But it may be worth suggesting what my conception of ministry to academics by rabbis might mean. . . . The rabbi as Judaic scholar becomes the peer of the academic, and only as Judaic scholar . . . whether by Judaic studies one means biblical exegesis or Jewish demography. . . . I would more readily attend a sermon on historical analogies to Old Testament literature, perhaps, than a sermon in which a rabbi purported to inform me about Black Power or, I might add, about Vietnam.

Professor Fein implies, but it remains to be said explicitly, that a rabbi speaking about or from Torah can also say something significant about Black Power or Vietnam—something that only he can say, and therefore that we must hear from him rather than from Pettigrew or Fein. No rabbi imagines that the Torah gives unequivocal commands about Black Power or Vietnam; yet, struggling with the problems or demands of this day, he can be helped by what the Torah says that is not of this day.

Once rabbis weren't skeptical enough about the usefulness of sermons. Now they're too skeptical.

The synagogues I go to aren't extraordinary. The rabbis who preach there aren't the most famous, but they are good rabbis, and I hear good sermons from them. Usually the sermons instruct me, sometimes they stir me, and sometimes they move me to do what I might otherwise not want to do or lack the will to do.

One such sermon was about Negroes and Jews, and was taken seriously because the congregation knew that the rabbi takes anti-Semitism seriously, including the anti-Semitism of black nationalist intellectuals. The rabbi told us our attitude toward Negroes was wrong. It was like that line from *My Fair Lady,* Why can't a woman be more like a man? We ask, Why can't Negroes be more like Jews? We should remember, he said, that in the Passover Haggadah the answer to the questions asked by the child begins, "We were slaves in Egypt." It is easier for slavery to produce a rabble than a people: the Torah tells us that many who left Egypt with Moses were *'erev rav* and *asafsuf.* Our ancestors had a revelation at Mount Sinai, and Ten Commandments. After having been so uniquely favored, they went on to the golden calf. If we insist on criticism of the Negroes, the rabbi concluded, it should be not that they are too little like the Jews, but too much.

Another sermon, by another rabbi, related even more directly to Passover. On the face of it, the sermon was unworldly, half ritual detail and half eschatology. The Prophetical lesson on the last day of Passover, from Isaiah, sees a transformation:

> . . . There shall come forth a shoot from the stock of Jesse,/and a branch shall grow out of his root./And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him. . . ./with righteousness he shall judge the poor,/and decide with equity for the humble of the earth. . . ./The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,/and the leopard shall lie down with the kid,/and the calf and the lion and the fatling together,/and a little child shall lead them./The cow and the bear shall graze;/their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox./The suckling child shall play over the hole of the asp,/and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den./They shall not hurt nor destroy/in all My holy mountain;/for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD/as the waters cover the sea./. . . and there will be a highway for the remnant of His people/that remains from Assyria,/as there was for Israel/when they came up from the land of Egypt./. . . with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation./And you will say in that day:/"Give thanks to the LORD,/call upon His name;/make known His deeds among the nations,/proclaim that His

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name is exalted. . . ./Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion,/for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

The rabbi told us that there is a link between that prophecy and a kabbalistic usage in the Seder. When we break the middle matzah we put aside the larger half for the *afikoman:* first we eat the smaller half and only later do we eat the larger. This is to signify that the future redemption will be greater than the redemption Passover celebrates, of the Jews from Egyptian slavery. There is yet to come the redemption of all men, and of nature itself, from the slavery of hurting, destroying, and ignorance of the Lord. Our Past Passover (*Pesah de-'avar*) is of the lesser redemption. The Future Passover (*Pesah de-'atid*) will be of the greater redemption. Celebrating the Past Passover, we long for the Future Passover. Prefiguring the Future Passover, we do the little we can—which is all we can—to lessen hurting, destroying, and ignorance.

The third rabbi has a sermon he repeats from time to time, with variations, about America, the Jews, and Jewish education. In America, he says, more than in any other country where Jews have lived as a minority, we enjoy freedom and opportunity without having to pay the price of abandoning Judaism. What we shall make of ourselves depends entirely on us. Precisely because America is so accepting, many are tempted to forget about Judaism—to want the best colleges for their children while being content wth a few years of Sunday school, or not even that. In quality and quantity, Jewish education must begin to match our ever-rising general education. Our responsibility, he concludes, is to assure Jewish education for our children (and ourselves).

None of these sermons is irrelevant. All, in different propositions of universalism and particularism, speak directly to us. They are relevant in the synagogue for the very reason that they wouldn't be relevant anywhere else. If we didn't hear them there, we wouldn't hear them anywhere. The synagogue in which they are preached and the rabbi who preaches them aren't irrelevant.

Now to return to what I mentioned earlier: on the whole, the critics ignore the simple, big fact that America is a Christian country. What it amounts to is that they ask the synagogue to behave as if most Americans were Jews. Asking synagogues to pretend they are the majority church doesn't mean asking them to be more relevant. It means asking them to be more irrelevant. (Now, in Israel it would be different.)

Whether as individuals or through our institutions, we enter into programs for dealing with racial inequities as if the relation of white Jews to Negroes were the same as of white Christians to Negroes. But most Negroes are, or have been, Christians. That must be our starting point. What would a Jewish congregation's remedial-reading program for Christian Negro children amount to? Wouldn't Negroes see it as Lady Bountiful's condescension? Of that they have had all they want. But might they not feel differently if they were members of the congregation, or invited to become members?

People have been asking why there aren't more black faces in insurance offices, or in TV commercials. The synagogue's critics ought to be asking why there aren't more black faces in Jewish congregations. And if that is for the future, right now there is a real problem that we aren't dealing with as we should be. There are some black Jews in the United States. On the whole, the overwhelmingly white synagogue hasn't done nearly enough to welcome them. If there are black Jews who are also black nationalists, the synagogue hasn't done nearly enough to talk with them.

The coin has two sides. It is true, as the critics say, that the synagogue should do more to condemn the exploitation of Negroes by Jewish merchants (or landlords, or employers). It is also true, as the critics usually don't say, that the synagogue should be indignant about having merchants identified as Jews. Granted, arguendo, that those merchants are exploiters and that they are Jews. Are they merchants who exploit or Jews who exploit? And in fact, is everyone an exploiter who is so accused? Everyone? Is everything done against him justified? Everything? The synagogue would ask these questions if the accusers, or those in whose name the accusation was made, were white. It must ask these questions if the accusers are black.

Provincialism can be of time as well as of geographic space or life space. In that sense, some of the synagogue's critics are provincial. They want it to be relevant to our time, but its time isn't ours alone. The synagogue's time is also liturgical time. It corresponds in a way to "seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night"—which "shall not cease," we have been promised, "so long as the earth endures." If one wishes, it is cyclical time rather than linear. (The cycles are short: daily, weekly, yearly.) In the synagogue's rhythm of liturgical time, it is being relevant to non-linear needs. Not that the synagogue's time isn't linear or contemporary at all; just that it also consists of Sabbath and weekday, feast and fast, morning and evening, before eating and after.

The critics' objections to the synagogue are temporally provincial, too, in making the assumptions of our time. For us these are axioms. We assume that only innovation and "creativity" count, forgetting that most of what we do isn't that sort of thing at all. Mostly, we work to hold the

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wilderness at bay, to preserve a clearing in the woods, to keep things going: making the beds, stopping the leak, mowing the lawn, delivering the mail and milk. Eric Hoffer calls this maintenance, and can be lyrical about it. Without maintenance, what would happen to our houses, schools, buildings, factories, stores, farms? The cyclical time of the synagogue is something like maintenance. It isn't innovative, it is merely sustaining—and altogether necessary, and worthy of honor and respect. If maintenance may be said to be feminine, and innovation (like adventure) masculine, then the synagogue, though classically it has been an institution of men, may be said to be in part a feminine institution. Is that wrong?

A girl says, "You go to the synagogue for a dance or to pray, but you never consider going there [for] social action. . . ." No Hebrew school when you were a child; no adult education (including lectures about civil rights); no meetings to protest Soviet anti-Semitism? And why equate prayer and a dance? If your grandfather and *his* grandfather hadn't prayed in a synagogue, what makes you so sure you would be so zealous for social action? Young Jews are a small fraction of all young Americans, but an appreciably bigger one of all young Americans who worry about and do social action. The synagogue—Judaism—isn't a sufficient explanation of that; but neither is any explanation sufficient which disregards the synagogue. And the social action of Jews doesn't have to take place in a synagogue building.

THERE IS another way in which the synagogue could fail us by being too much of our time. We would love democracy shallowly if we didn't realize how problematic it is. If we took democracy as self-evidently best, we couldn't hope to understand what Churchill meant when he said that democracy is the worst of all forms of government--except any other form that has ever been tried. We couldn't understand Bishop Stubbs saying that feudalism would be best, if men were angels and archangels. We couldn't respond to the Shakespeare who says:

> . . . O! when degree is shak'd,/Which is the ladder to all high designs,/The enterprise is sick. How could communities,/. . . But by degree, stand in authentic place?/Take but degree away, untune that string,/And, hark! what discord follows; each thing meets/In mere oppugnancy. . . .

Shakespeare our contemporary, yes. And our ancestor. The synagogue is, it has to be, our contemporary and our ancestor.

Perhaps because of the season, Passover is on my mind; or perhaps because Passover is central to the Jewish experience and imagination. At the time of the revolution of 1848, the leading Jewish educator in Germany was Samuel Ehrenberg (the great-grandfather of Franz Rosenzweig and of his Lutheran cousins). Exulting in the emancipations decreed by the revolution, Ehrenberg wanted to remove fom the Haggadah the passage which reads, "Now we are slaves, next year may we be free men." He was trying to make the synagogue relevant. Could anyone have been more irrelevant?

Even politically, it is still too soon for us to stop saying, "Now we are slaves." And beyond politics, not until the Future Passover will we stop being slaves (or enslaved, or slavish). Despite Israeli independence, for which God be thanked, those Orthodox are right who say that only the Future Passover will abolish the fast of the Ninth of Av, which laments exile. The Jews' physical or political exile may be passing—let us hope so—but the passing of the exile of the children of Adam from Eden is not yet on the horizon. Until then, on Passover let us say that now we are slaves and on the Ninth of Av let us lament exile, and let contemporaries think all that to be irrelevant.

On *Shabbat Ha-gadol*, the Sabbath before Passover, we read the last verses of the last Prophet, Malachi: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes. And he will turn the heart of the fathers back to the sons, and the heart of the sons back to their fathers, in order that I may not come and smite the land with a curse. (Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes.)" Elijah is the forerunner of the Messiah. Only Elijah or the Messiah can bring about a full reconciliation of fathers with sons; only the Future Passover. In the meantime, hoping for as much reconciliation as we are capable of, we are resigned to some separation.

If the fathers are also taken to represent history (the past, tradition), and the sons to represent contemporaneity (the present, relevance), we must conclude that until the Messiah comes we have to live, uneasily, with both. Since it isn't the characteristic temptation of our generations to slight the present in favor of the past, for us a call to present relevance may not be the needful thing. For us the needful thing may be to remember that relevance, unlike ripeness, isn't all.

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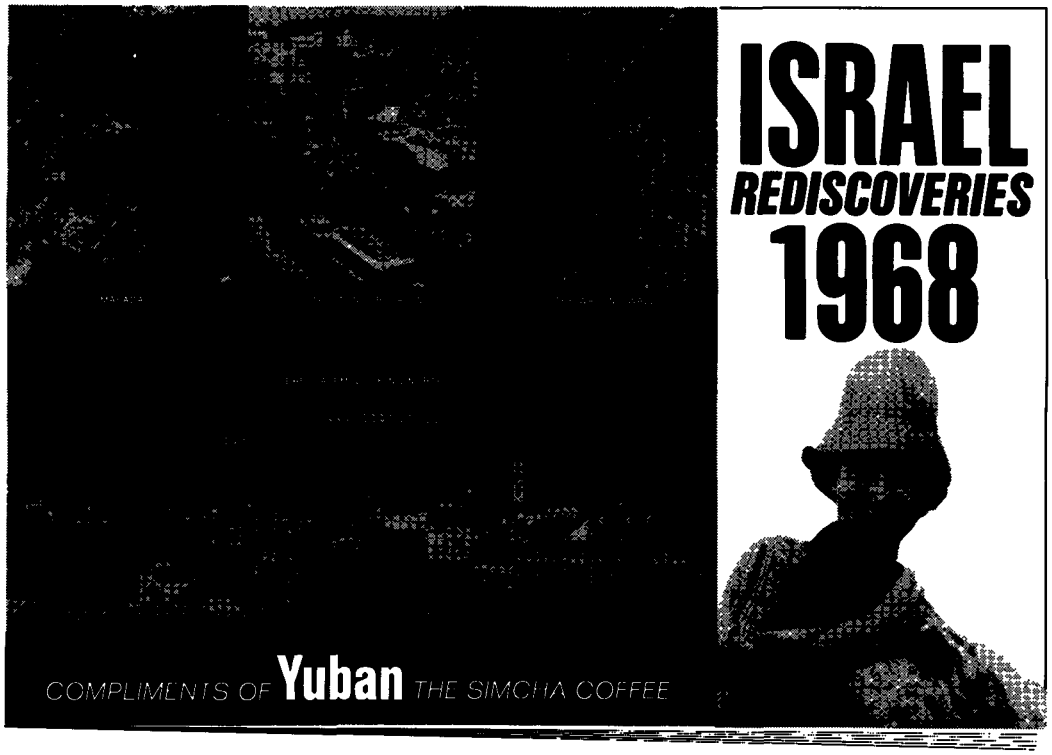

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Europe & the United States

George Lichtheim

LONDON, APRIL: This may be the wrong moment to dwell upon the relationship between America and Western Europe, as seen from the capital of what in more spacious days was known as the British Empire. The U.S. public—one is told by news commentators and transatlantic visitors—is deeply engrossed in the Presidential election stakes, and whatever energy is left over from this topic must inevitably be shared out between two other (literally) burning problems: Vietnam and the racial crisis. Nonetheless it remains one's duty to report that a turning-point has been reached in yet another area. Starting from the first tentative moves in Washington last January to stem the outflow of dollars, and continuing via the gold rush in March and the subsequent monetary conferences, something has changed in the relationship between the two halves of the North Atlantic partnership. The Europeans, to put it baldly, have formed the impression that in future they will have to act jointly (a) to preserve their interests and (b) to guard against irrationality in Washington. They are even beginning to think that it may be up to them to help keep the U.S. ship of state upon a more or less even keel.

Now this is something quite new. Until recently, the West Europeans—with the single exception of the French—had assumed as a matter of course that, whatever else might be said about the United States, at any rate its power was unchallengeable, its global role clearly defined, and its internal stability to be taken for granted. Similarly, it was supposed that Western Europe could be safe only under the U.S. nuclear umbrella. As a corollary of these beliefs, it was likewise held that the North Atlantic alliance formalized in 1949 would go on, even if France withdrew, as theoretically she had the right. None of this can any longer be regarded as certain. It is not even certain that, confronted with a choice between an "American" and a "European" orientation, countries such as Britain or West Germany will invariably come down on the American side. They may or they may not (the Germans in their present mood probably will not).

The extent of France's, and therefore Europe's victory in this crucial area has been concealed from the Anglo-American public by the near-unanimous flood of drivel printed in the more prestigious English-language papers; not to mention the popular news media, whose grotesque antics on the occasion of the international monetary crisis last March finally drew a protest from the *Economist*, itself among the major culprits in misinforming its clientele as to what was actually going on in the world. Habitual readers of this influential journal have yet to be acquainted with some elementary facts about Europe (not to mention Southeast Asia or the Middle East)—e.g., the fact that the present British government never had the smallest chance of being allowed to enter the Common Market, let alone disrupt the alliance between France and Germany—the open and avowed aim of every British official at home or abroad. But all this is trivial compared to the overriding fact that the union of Western Europe is currently beginning to take the form of a movement away from the America of Mr. Johnson and his cronies (one can hardly describe them in more dignified terms).

For a start, consider some of the recent utterances of Harold Wilson, always a reliable weather-vane, if not in other respects a very remarkable public figure. In his devaluation broadcast last November, the Prime Minister terminated with a rhetorical flourish to the effect that "we are on our own now"—a pathetic echo of Churchill which predictably evoked scorn and ridicule from his hearers. Four months later, on March 21, there took place the following brief exchange in the House of Commons:

> Mr. Marten (Banbury, Conservative) asked the Prime Minister if he would discuss with the U.S. President the question of a joint feasibility study of the North Atlantic free-trade area proposals, in view of the similar study now being undertaken in the United States.
>
> Mr. Harold Wilson (Huyton, Labour): No. As the House knows, there is no evidence that a North Atlantic free-trade area is a realistic present alternative to membership in the European Economic Community, which remains the government's prime aim. In these circumstances, a diversion of resources to a major feasibility study could not be justified.

Now it may be said that Mr. Wilson is in the habit of changing his mind quite frequently, even on important issues, and that anyway he had left a back-door open. It may also be said that the chances

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of his decrepit government being invited into the EEC are about equal to the chances of Mr. Johnson's administration turning South Vietnam into a model democracy. The fact remains that Mr. Wilson has begun to edge away from the close embrace of Mr. Johnson, and when he does this the writing on the wall is plain for all to see. For Mr. Wilson in the past has not only been the most loyal of Johnsonians: he has actually gloried in the role of America's Trojan Donkey. On the occasion of a visit he paid to Washington in July 1966, he responded to the President's toast by saying for public consumption: "We are in Europe already, and we can look forward to playing a bigger part in Europe if we can get the conditions that make this possible. But we would never do that if it meant turning our backs on our Atlantic loyalty and—if I can use the phrase from your White Sulphur Springs speech—our Pacific loyalty as well." You don't hear Mr. Wilson, or any other British public figure, uttering such sentiments today. The emphasis is all on European solidarity (not that this is going to do the present team much good, though it may help its Tory successors in the 1970's). As for "our Pacific loyalty," that went down the drain in January, when the date of departure from Singapore was suddenly advanced from 1975 to 1971. I shall come back to this later on. For the moment, let us look at the European picture.

HERE WE HAVE what at first sight seems like a plain contradiction. On the one hand, the British Government says it wants to join the EEC and has no use for an Atlantic free-trade area. On the other hand, its representatives are consistently to be found battling for the American viewpoint at international monetary conferences. Moreover, Washington's crisis measures last January to stem the outflow of dollars had the effect of grouping Britain with Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan, while the Continental Europeans went into a different (and less favored) category. Clearly, the Six of the EEC were then intended to bear the brunt of Washington's efforts to reduce the U.S. payments deficit, while Britain, Canada, Australia, Japan, and the oil-producing countries, were placed in a different class in regard to U.S. investments abroad.

But that was before the gold rush last March and the battle to "defend the dollar": an absurd phrase, considering that not a single economist of any distinction would treat as a matter of principle the question whether gold is purchased at thirty-five dollars an ounce, or at twice or thrice that amount. No matter, the Johnson administration, having nailed its colors to this mast (how long will it be before they are hauled down?), the Six of the EEC suddenly found they had a means of putting pressure on Washington by cooperating, or failing to cooperate, in the sham battle to keep the official gold price stable. The gold price cannot be kept stable, if only because there is no way of effectively preventing the "leakage" of central-bank reserves into the "open" market; and the whole issue is largely meaningless anyhow, since a world rise in the official gold price would make no difference to the value of the dollar in terms of other national currencies: the only thing that really matters. But the gold panic, and the consequent flurry of international monetary meetings, has had the effect of dramatizing the split between the Anglo-American group and the Continental European bloc. The latter suddenly turned out to possess a degree of internal coherence which had not been suspected. Moreover, the U.S. administration found it possible—indeed necessary—to deal with the EEC as a more or less equal partner, at any rate in the monetary field. Never mind that the gold issue is largely mythical, and the alleged danger of a "world economic crisis" the brainchild of excited journalists working upon half-understood hints emanating from official sources. The outcome has been to publicize the rift between Continental Europe and the Anglo-American group: the latter, plus Japan and Australia-New Zealand, has been shown to prefer the dollar to gold.

II

NOW IT IS of course part of the Anglo-American mythology that all sensible people want either a dollar standard or a new international paper currency, and that only de Gaulle's antiquated prejudice in favor of gold stands between the world and a rational monetary arrangement. But no one in Europe believes this. After all, people can read, and they know (from reading *Le Monde,* for example) that even the General's sharpest critics share his determination to have done with the constant American payments deficit. This deficit has two main sources: Vietnam, and the export of American capital to Western Europe. Some of the latter takes the form of genuine investment in European industry. The rest is "funk money" held in Swiss banks (and as such liable to provoke another monetary panic a few months from now, if the unofficial gold price tempts its owners to convert from Swiss francs into yellow metal). There is a further twist: it is believed that a large proportion of the 2,000 million dollars annually spent by U.S. troops in Vietnam finds its way through Saigon back to the Eurodollar market: the European "free" market in expatriate dollars. The money comes in mainly through France (a consequence of the long-established French ties with Southeast Asia) and eventually winds up in Swiss banks, where it joins the billions held by Arab and Persian owners of Middle Eastern oil royalties. These funds animate

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an unofficial gold market centered on Beirut, the Persian Gulf, and Hongkong; and whatever the authorities may assert to the contrary, there is no way of stabilizing the official gold price while billions of convertible dollars (some estimates run as high as $15,000 million) are floating around in this fashion. That is why the current arrangements among the central banks have merely bought time.

To the more radical theorists, none of this matters: they are convinced that gold will eventually be demonetized anyhow and replaced by an international currency managed by the World Bank or some such institution. But the short-run choice is not between gold or "paper gold," but between gold or the dollar, and the dollar has been rendered unstable by the policies of successive U.S. administrations and the growing unwillingness of the Continental Europeans to hold dollars as a reserve currency. West Germany is expected to have a payments surplus equivalent to several billion dollars this year, and few people believe that the *Bundesbank* will want to add to its dollar holdings. It will, of course, play the game so far as the gold market is concerned, but its officials will be all the more insistent that the U.S. should scale down its payments deficit—and not by shutting out European goods either! As for the French, they have already hinted that, while the Bank of France will do nothing to undermine the official gold price, it cannot accept "unwarranted foreign interference"—such as inquiries from the U.S. Federal Reserve as to the purpose of French gold transactions. Paris may in the end agree to the creation of "special drawing rights" (vulgarly known as "paper gold") on condition that the International Monetary Fund ceases to be American-dominated. The argument is that America should not be the only country in the world to have its deficits underwritten abroad. "To accept this system," said M. Michel Debré last March, " is to accept the idea that America alone is responsible for policing the world." In other words, if the U.S. wants to act as the Western world's political and military trustee, it ought to consult (at the very least) its allies about its policies. This notion may be new to Americans; it is becoming very fashionable in Europe.

Not that the U.S. lacks defenders in Britain; but they are to be found mainly among economists who don't know or don't care about the real world. "Politics proposes; but economics almost always disposes," one of these pundits wrote loftily last January. A few months later he got his comeuppance in the shape of an economic panic initiated by the political blunders of the Johnson administration. The argument one generally hears in these quarters is that the whole thing is really a fuss about nothing: after all, the U.S. payments deficit equals only one-half of one per cent of America's gross national product, so why worry? The answer is that the U.S. has been acting as Europe's banker, and bankers can't afford to become insolvent even if they have a heap of capital assets to back them up. The London *Spectator*—a conservative journal—put it very clearly on March 22: "The plain fact is that America cannot *both* manage her economy at home and conduct policies overseas which together add up to a continuous payments deficit on a substantial scale, *and* at the same time expect the rest of the world to hold its monetary reserves in dollars. This would remain true even if gold did not exist at all." It would also remain true even if de Gaulle did not exist. It is indisputable that he does his best to unify Continental Europe on an anti-American platform; but he is able to do it only because the Johnson administration has handed him an issue which neatly links expert worries with popular sentiments: the hopeless war in Vietnam and its repercussions in the monetary sphere.

Still one can hear it said that, whatever the Continental Six of the EEC may in the end decide to do, Britain at least has a choice: she can range herself with the U.S., Canada, Australia, and Japan, in a free-trade alliance and let the European gold bloc go hang. As Peter Jay put it in the (London) *Times* on January 4 (in a message cabled from Washington): "By the time devaluation has put Britain on its feet and the United States deficit has been reduced to less than $1,000 million at the expense of European industry, the whole thing may begin to look so different that new political sums will have to be done. A protected and technologically underdeveloped Europe, cut off from the mainstream of competitive world trade, dependent perhaps for settling its international debts on an obsolete stock of gold from which the dollar backing has been removed, would confront a more rapidly growing, larger, and more technologically sophisticated North American and Pacific market."

STOUT WORDS. But what sort of place would the United Kingdom have in such an arrangement? "It would be a free choice for Britain," added Mr. Jay. "We might of course go under, but the fatal wound would at least not be in the back, as it would be if we settled for being technological cock of the softer European market —assuming indeed that we could even be that." These heroic sentiments were uttered on the morrow of Washington's decision to give Britain preference over Continental Europe in the matter of U.S. overseas investments. Their author adheres to the Gaitskellite school, which has always placed Anglo-American solidarity ahead of all other considerations. But for this kind of option to make sense, the Wilson government would at least have had to proclaim its determination to stay in Singapore until 1975: instead of which it did the exact opposite, thereby pulling the rug from under the

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surviving champions of the "special relationship." Nor is the drift toward Europeanism and/or Little Englandism likely to be reversed by a Tory administration in the 1970's. Faced with the alarming spectacle of Mr. Johnson's America, the leadership of the Conservative party has begun to opt for Europe—reluctantly but definitely. And once the Establishment has closed its ranks, with both major parties committed to the same orientation, the issue is as good as settled.

Admittedly, some rear-guard actions remain to be fought, for Whitehall, as usual, would like it both ways: get into the Common Market (together with the Scandinavians) and still count among America's favored allies. But the scales are tilting inexorably against this kind of orientation. "It is no longer heresy," a columnist in the liberal and pro-American *Guardian* wrote last January, "to regard the American takeover of key European industries as a very grave threat, or to point out that it has been facilitated by American inflationary policies. . . . It is easier to export inflation than to export goods, and so long as the American government continued to run a huge deficit, European firms had little protection against monopolistic bids by their American rivals." The writer went on to quote from M. Servan-Schreiber's controversial bestseller *Le Défi Américain*, where the current economic rivalry between Europe and America is termed "the first great war fought without arms or armor." By no stretch of the imagination can this influential French editor and author be described as a Gaullist, yet the arguments he advances, and the policies he advocates, amount to the sort of Europeanism which until quite recently was the preserve of the Gaullist school. There is now a competition going on in France between government and opposition, each trying to sound more "European" than the other, while Herr Kiesinger tells his countrymen that West Germany's future cannot lie in "a sort of North Atlantic imperium" and his government drags its feet over the signing of the joint Soviet-American draft treaty on nuclear proliferation.

"So we are back at power politics," a writer on M. Servan-Schreiber's *L'Express* reported from Paris in the London *Spectator* on March 22 "with the Americans and the French battling for the soul of Germany. America's bargaining strength is her troops on German soil; France's, her support for German policy toward a rapidly changing Eastern European world." There are still a number of people in London who think the Germans will eventually come down on the U.S. side. Haven't they in fact done so over tariff cuts, "special drawing rights," and other bits of financial manipulation? Yes, indeed—whenever the issue was not really fundamental, and whenever it could be represented as a straightforward quarrel between Washington and Paris. But all this is mere froth on the surface of an ocean in whose depths the real and abiding choice—the choice between Europe and America—has already been quietly taken: by the Germans no less than by the French and the other West Europeans. The British, it is true, are still hesitant. Having been twice barred from the Common Market, they are uncertain whether to persist in their new-found European role, or resign themselves to playing third fiddle in an Anglo-American empire. But for the shattering impact of the Vietnamese disaster, piled on top of the sterling-dollar crisis and America's growing racial trouble, the pro-Europeans might even have lost out, for dislike of Continental Europe runs deep in this island. It has taken the combined talents of Messrs. Johnson, Rusk, and Westmoreland to persuade the average Briton that no such thing as a genuine *Pax Americana* is in sight. What he sees instead is chaos, and his instinct tells him that Europe is a safer place to be in.

III

WHAT then is to become of NATO? What indeed can be done about a military alliance when the danger it was created to meet has vanished almost from sight? Hardly anyone in Western Europe believes any longer that NATO is needed to defend the Continent against a standing military menace from the Soviet Union. Moreover, the technicians now tend to think that—while no such threat actually exists any longer—NATO would not in fact be very useful to Europe were it called upon to play its chosen role. "War game" studies at a British defense research establishment (according to the military correspondent of the London *Times*), "have led to the conclusion that a concerted Russian advance into Western Europe could not be held up for more than two or three days, even if all the West's seven thousand battlefield nuclear weapons were used. The assumption behind the study was that the Russians would match nuclear weapon for nuclear weapon in such a situation. Apart from the fact that a battlefield exchange of nuclear weapons of that intensity would virtually obliterate the battlefield itself, it is the view in Whitehall that at the end of the exchange the Russians would still have the numerical superiority in conventional troops with which they started" (The *Times*, 24 February, 1968).

Translate that into ordinary language, and you get a simple answer to the question what practical use NATO is, now that it has been neutralized by the parallel development of Soviet weaponry. Plainly what keeps the situation stable is the fact that neither side wants the kind of nuclear exchange which would inevitably develop if the Russian "steamroller" ever got moving. Nuclear weapons do deter, though it may be impossible to

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match conventional enemy forces on the ground. This was and is the justification for maintaining NATO in being, even though no one any longer credits the Russians with any intention of putting the matter to the test.

So far, so good. But having said this, the danger of an uncontrollable military muddle arising, perhaps in the Berlin area, from recklessness or miscalculation on either side, cannot be wholly ruled out. A clash in Central Europe could start almost by accident if either side misinterpreted the movements of the other, and it would then be rapidly escalated to the nuclear stage. "Crisis management" has not yet reached the stage of perfection postulated in some current literature on the topic. There is thus a case—even from the Soviet viewpoint—for keeping NATO in existence, rather than allowing the West Germans the degree of independence they would inevitably obtain in the 1970's if American and British forces were withdrawn. In fact there is reason to believe that the Russians are not really worried about NATO, though for the record they go on demanding its dissolution. Inversely, the Western allies are not as keen on German reunification as they are in the habit of asserting. A united Germany would inevitably upset the precarious balance now prevailing. It would overshadow Western Europe, alarm the Russians, and perhaps encourage the more irrational elements in Washington. It would also promote political and intellectual retrogression in Prague and Warsaw—not that the Poles need a lot of prompting. For all these reasons, German unification is undesirable; fortunately, it is also most improbable. This is not merely due to the prevalence of unreconstructed Stalinism in East Berlin. A more liberal East German regime, on the Czechoslovak model, would still have to stay within the Warsaw Pact, and it would still be indigestible from the West German viewpoint. The current "thaw" in Prague is welcome, but in military terms it portends nothing fundamental. All it signifies is the likelihood of East European Communism losing some of its more obnoxious features.

One thus comes back to the simplest argument of all: the present NATO arrangements are adequate because the Soviet leaders cannot be sure that a forward move in Central Europe would not trigger an American nuclear response. On the other hand, the West Europeans are increasingly skeptical about the promise that such a response *will* be triggered off. There was a time when America's readiness to run nuclear risks on Europe's behalf was beyond question. Today the French are not alone in thinking that it is highly doubtful whether the U.S. will in fact risk a full-scale intercontinental nuclear exchange for the sake of Western Europe. As for the consequences of a "battlefield exchange" the only certainty is that, when it is over, there will be nothing left worth defending on either side of what used to be known as the Iron Curtain. This is as obvious to the Poles, the Czechs, and the Hungarians, as it is to the Rumanians and the Yugoslavs, who have already drawn the logical consequence by opting out of automatic military entanglements. In this respect, Rumania is simply following the French example, with the obvious difference that France is aiming to become a nuclear power. The implications of French military policy for the 1970's are overwhelmingly obvious: they are neutralist. This may be irrelevant from the U.S. viewpoint, but it poses a problem for the British. London does not fancy the idea of a Franco-German military bloc running Europe's future defense policies—not because these policies are likely to be adventurous, but on the contrary, because they look like being isolationist. Behind the drive to "get into Europe" (a misnomer for the attempt to join up with the Six) there lies the belief that Britain cannot afford to be frozen out of future Continental developments: political, technological, military.

This has implications for the projected North Atlantic Free Trade Area (NAFTA for short). There is indeed a link between NAFTA and NATO, although it is not often discussed in public. NAFTA's American and British sponsors tend to place the Anglo-American connection before everything else, and they do so largely for non-economic reasons. To quote an authoritative source: "The core of the NAFTA idea is an English-speaking club, an expanded White Commonwealth to which the EFTA countries [in practice this means the Scandinavians—G.L.] could be admitted as honorary Englishmen, and the Japanese—well, the Japanese, one has to mention them to interest the Australians and New Zealanders, and American exporters frustrated by extensive Japanese non-tariff barriers, but what British NAFTA-ist would break his heart if they said no?" (*The Economist*, 30 March, 1968.)

Now this scheme has a number of supporters, possibly even beyond those listed by the same journal in these terms: "The Jay family, the Bank of London and South America, the *Evening Standard*, and a handful of MP's, economists, and Anglo-Canadians." (It may be worth explaining that Douglas Jay was for a while a member of Mr. Wilson's administration, and that a junior member of the clan supplies the *Times* with economic expertise.) These people and their friends have always opposed the idea of joining the Common Market, as being economically unsound and in any case liable to deepen the gulf between the U.S. and the British Commonwealth. It is therefore remarkable that the *Economist*, for all its loyalty to NATO, has been unable to swallow NAFTA. The reason once more is very simply stated: "The strongest single objection is

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that NAFTA would cut off Britain from the EEC for the foreseeable future. One cannot be very confident that Britain, as it is now, will be admitted to membership by the first post-Gaullist government in France. One can be very confident that a Britain tied into an economic system wholly dominated by the United States would be shut out, and not just by France." (*Ibid.*, March 30.)

TO THE MORE consistent advocates of the scheme, this does not matter: on the contrary, they would welcome it. The *Economist* dislikes the notion, as being dangerous to Western solidarity: "For many years at least, it would divide the Western world into two economic blocks, and thereby into two political blocks. The United States would be cut off from all but one of its major European allies, and probably from most of its minor ones. This would be a most pleasing result for President de Gaulle; is it one that could please any Atlanticist or—however tattered John Kennedy's 'grand design' may now look—any American President?" (*Ibid.*) Perhaps we shall all know the answer to that last question by November, for there are those who believe that Mr. Johnson at least could not care less about Europe: his mind (it is thought in London) is fixed upon Asia and the coming confrontation with China. Which is why the British decision to evacuate Singapore ahead of schedule was so badly received by his advisers last January. If the British are going to behave like that (one can hear them telling each other) it hardly matters whether they are in Asia or not. It has indeed almost ceased to matter—though mainly for technological reasons. For the rest, a Tory government in the 1970's (now a virtual certainty) is likely to disappoint its American friends in a different sort of way: it will certainly not aim at "Swedish" pacifism and neutrality, but it is quite likely to adopt as large a slice of the Gaullist inheritance as the City bankers can be made to swallow. The Tory leaders who really matter are those closest to the military establishment. These men have had a long look at the recent U.S. record in Asia, and they have not liked what they have seen. If Washington wants to escalate its conflict with China, it will—in Mr. Truman's immortal if ungrammatical phrase—have to "go it alone."

Postscript: A number of stirring events have taken place since the above was written, but none that affects the basic argument. If anything, Mr. Johnson's virtual admission of defeat in Vietnam has increased the skepticism with which his administration has for many months been viewed by the top-ranking members of the British Establishment, with *The Times* in the lead. As for his dramatic decision not to stand for reelection, it is perhaps charitable at this stage to say no more than that few people in London are wholly convinced of its finality.

There is also an undercurrent of feeling that whoever becomes President next November will have his hands tied by the growing menace of racial bloodshed at home, and be all the less willing to take new initiatives abroad. If this leads to the long-overdue de-escalation in Vietnam, and perhaps to an improvement in U.S.-Soviet relations, relief will certainly be felt in Western as well as in Eastern Europe. But there will also be a feeling that the U.S. is likely, for some years at least, to go on the defensive internationally and scale down its commitments abroad. This need not result in the dissolution of NATO, any more than the Russians are likely to renounce the Warsaw Pact. It will simply mean that the Big Two may come to regard the status quo as worth preserving, without bothering too much about the interests of their minor allies. Viewed from London, this is going to look like good sense. It will also deepen the conviction that Western Europe must acquire a political identity of its own.

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Lévi-Strauss & the Primitive

Robert L. Zimmerman

WHY ARE WE so fascinated by the primitive? Why do we continue to investigate primitive man? Is it because we envy his simplicity and spontaneity? Does his animality excite and "eroticize" us? Or is it because our desire for self-knowledge—indeed, for more than that, for a self, an identity—drives us beyond our own beginning to the beginning of our race? Do we somehow know, as Hegel put it, that to become a person one must "ingest" the history of the race, become a We in order to become an I?

Although all of the above explanations no doubt have something to do with our continued investigation of the primitive, the last seems to me the most compelling. It is therefore somewhat paradoxical that one of the results of this investigation has been the fairly widespread acceptance of the view that, after all, the primitive is *not* like us; rather, he is a pre-man, a savage, a creature one cut above the beast. Most of us, in other words, have come to believe that the history of the race is analogous to the history of an individual, in that it has a beginning stage which is outgrown in time and which stands to what comes after it as the potential stands to the actual, the complete and the developed to the incomplete and undeveloped.

This view has had some formidable champions, among them Auguste Comte, Sir James George Frazer, Levy-Bruhl, Hegel, and others. In our time, it has had a formidable critic: Claude Lévi-Strauss, the distinguished French social anthropologist. In his many works, Lévi-Strauss has argued that this interpretation of the primitive is factually and theoretically indefensible. *The Savage Mind,** the most recent of his books to be translated into English, contains perhaps the most thorough presentation of Lévi-Strauss's position, and is for this reason worth summarizing at some length, although it should be stated at the outset that no summary of the argument can do justice to its complexity or to the vast amount of evidence introduced to defend it.

In *The Savage Mind*, Lévi-Strauss undertakes an analysis of primitive thought in general—which, he argues, far from lacking a conceptual structure, rests upon a remarkably rich and complex one—and of primitive scientific thought in particular—which he argues is full-blown scientific thought and not, as we have been used to hearing, some pre-logical, non-rational counterfeit of it. Although primitive science is tied to the world of perception and imagination—the phenomenological world of the felt, immediate qualities of things—and organized in aesthetic and mythological terms, it does not follow, according to Lévi-Strauss, that it is therefore an inferior or theoretically defective science. It represents rather a method of approaching nature that is only *other than*, not less than, the one employed by modern science. As he puts it, there are

> . . . two distinct modes of scientific thought . . . two . . . levels at which nature is accessible to scientific enquiry: one . . . that of perception and imagination: the other at a remove from it. It is as if the objects of science . . . could be arrived at by two different routes, one very close to, and the other more remote from, sensible intuition.

The order of nature, that is to say, appears *on* its sensible surface as well as *beneath* it; the perceptible order of things reflects the imperceptible order of things, and is thus reachable by two routes: one which travels by way of the sensible features and felt qualities of things, the other which penetrates to what lies beneath and beyond them. Thus:

> Wild cherries, cinnamon, vanilla, and cherry are grouped together by the intellect as well as by the senses because they all contain aldehyde, while the closely related smells of wintergreen, lavender, and banana are to be explained by the presence of ester. On intuitive grounds alone we might group onions, garlic, cabbage, turnips, and mustard together even though botany separates liliceae and crucifers. In confirmation of the evidence of the senses chemistry shows that these different families are united on another plane: they contain sulphur.

To be sure, not *every* link on the surface of nature signifies or reflects a link in its depths. But to say this is only to demonstrate the imperfect nature of a science based on the secondary properties of things, not to show that such a science is illegitimate.

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THE PRIMITIVE, in other words, seeks the order of his world in sensible terms, and thus creates a science based on the sensible aspects of things. But this is not all. His search, according to Lévi-Strauss, is motivated not merely by a utilitarian, but also by a theoretical, interest. If it were otherwise, we could not explain, among other things, the existence in the primitive's language of terms which refer to objects or features of objects having little or no practical value. For example, although Indians of the Northeastern United States and Canada derive no economic benefit from reptiles, they nevertheless possess a herpetology with distinct terms for each genus of reptile, and other terms applying to particular species and varieties. And even when a known object *does* afford an economic benefit to the tribe, the process of "over-knowing" which takes place, and the elaborate terminology which is created to express it, suggest an interest or a drive which is more than practical. Thus, for instance, "The Hanunóo have more than a hundred and fifty terms for the parts and properties of plants. . . . Over six hundred named plants have been recorded among the Pinatubo . . . and one hundred terms [for] parts and characteristics of plants."

Furthermore, if the utility of an animal be taken as the reason for its being known, then the knowledge the primitive has of certain animals which, in his mind, have curative properties (like spiders for fertility, worms for rheumatism, or frozen bear excreta for constipation) must be said to be truly astounding. For surely it is absurd to claim that the primitive came to know about spiders, worms, and frozen bear excreta because they respectively cured sterility, rheumatism, and constipation. It seems more likely, as Lévi-Strauss observes, that ". . . animals are not known as a result of their usefulness; they are deemed useful . . . because they are first of all known."

Consider also the divination of omens. Among the Iban or Sea Dayaks of South Borneo, the songs and cries of certain birds are taken to be guides to the future:

> The rapid cry of the Crested Jay . . . is said to resemble the crackling of burning wood and so presages the successful firing of a family's swiddens. The alarm cry of the Trogon . . . is likened to the death rattle of an animal being slain and augurs good hunting.

Clearly the resemblances and associations between the cries and what they suggest are independent of any practical considerations. They are, rather, the spontaneous products of "free association": the apprehension of the phenomenological qualities of the cries. It is because this "logic" is at work that the cries become omens and take on signification. In other words, it is only *after* the cry has been associated with some event, and been given a "meaning," that it begins to function in a practical way, namely, as evidence of what is to occur.

In his science, then, the primitive exhibits a theoretical interest. He strives to detect the order and connections among the objects in his world to satisfy his "instinct" for order and connectedness. Contrary to the widely held belief, the primitive is not a "savage" who is governed only by his bodily impulses and who thinks, if at all, in merely utilitarian terms. His desires are not limited to those things which are "good to eat"; he is as much desirous of those things which are "good to think." Thus, if we accept the dual premise that disinterested inquiry and classification—*whatever* the principle of that classification might be—is the core of a genuine science, and that primitive science is an instance of such disinterested inquiry and classification, we come with Lévi-Strauss to the conclusion that primitive science is genuine science.

Lévi-Strauss continues his assault on the myth of the primitive as savage by turning to the phenomena of totemism and totemic classification. Through an analysis of these phenomena—first undertaken in *Totemism** and present in its basic conclusions throughout the body of his writings—Lévi-Strauss tries to show, contrary to this myth, that primitive thought rests upon a rich and complex conceptual structure. More specifically, he argues, negatively, that totemism is an illusion and that the classic understanding of it is wrong (among other things, this understanding holds that members of a clan identify with the totemic object and literally believe it to be their ancestor); positively, he argues that totemism represents a highly sophisticated mechanism for ordering or classifying which has as its (unconscious) goal the differentiation and integration of units within society. Classification in terms of totemic objects stands in relation to *social* entities or phenomena as classification as such stands in relation to *natural* entities and phenomena: both, that is, signify and ratify the diversity-within-unity of what is. What this means can perhaps best be illustrated by some examples. In *Totemism*, Lévi-Strauss describes an Australian tribe ". . . which names its moieties after the parts of a tree. In the Ngeumba tribe Gwaidmudthen is divided into nhurai (butt) and wangue (middle) while Gwaigulir is equivalent to winngo (top). These names refer to the different portions of the shadow of a tree and refer to the positions taken up in camping." And in *The Savage Mind*, speaking about the class of the Chicksaw tribe, he observes:

> The Racoon people . . . live on fish and wild fruit, those of the Puma lived in the mountains . . . and lived principally on game. The Wild Cat clan slept in the daytime and hunted at

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night . . . Members of the Bird clan were up before daybreak. . . . The people of the Red Fox clan were professional thieves . . . the Redskunk lived in dugouts underground.

What these examples illustrate is the classificatory function of totemism. The totemic naming system is a device, a structure, a mechanism for distinguishing among *and* correlating the various groups within a tribe. As Rousseau observed (Lévi-Strauss is indebted to him in this), totemism, by superimposing a set of natural entities upon a set of social entities, translates the latter into the former. The facts of social life—such as the functions of different clans, their hunting duties and positions, spatial location within the village, position in the hierarchy, exogamous relations, etc.—are thus "coded" in terms of a symbolism or notation derived from the totemic objects themselves, i.e., from nature. The set of totemic objects, with its perceived internal distinctions and its overall organicity, stands in a symbolic or metaphorical relation to the set of units which comprise the social organism. Totemism is thus based upon symbolic or metaphoric reasoning. It can be thought of as a logic generated by a phenomenal awareness of an analogy between nature and society or among sets of things which contain similar differences. It provides a calculus for social ordering and makes the structure of society lucid and thinkable. Or—what comes to the same thing—it is a code which metaphorically represents the units within society, their various roles, and the relations they bear to one another.

THERE IS MUCH to say about this enormously fertile and provocative interpretation of totemism. Not only does it salvage the phenomenon of totemism which, as classically conceived, had virtually become meaningless because of the wealth of counter-instances raised against it (e.g., the many clans which did not identify with the totemic object or in which totems were chosen willy-nilly with no pretense of literal ancestry); not only does it remove totemism from the narrow framework of magic or religion and place it within the broader framework of taxonomical activity as such; but, with one stroke, it re-establishes the continuity between primitive and modern man. It accomplishes this because the function of totemism is now seen as a function which *any and every* society in search of cohesion and interplay must somehow symbolize and underwrite through some mechanism or other. In other words, as Lévi-Strauss observes, when we deal with totemism:

> We are . . . dealing not with an autonomous institution which can be defined by its distinctive properties and is typical of certain regions of the world and certain forms of civilization, but with a *modus operandi* which can be discerned even behind social structures traditionally defined in a way diametrically opposed to totemism.

Deciphering the totemic code, the significations of the totemic objects both in themselves and as they relate to each other, is a complicated process. The meaning of an object or an event is a function of that with which it is paired or associated, and since such pairing is rather variable (although not arbitrary), to re-establish the semantic value of a totemic name, or the relations among a group of totemic names, becomes a difficult task. This, of course, is an instance of the larger difficulty of deciphering the meanings of objects and events as such. For as we saw with respect to the meanings of bird cries, the linked entities (i.e., the cry and the event it brought to mind) are connected by an "informal" logic, a logic which utilizes the modalities and "feels" of things. Such a logic, although not in itself irrational (we can understand the relations it fixes once we know what those relations are) is not based on reason and is thus difficult to reconstruct rationally.

Furthermore, primitive logic, the logic behind totemic and all primitive classification, utilizes many poles of reference in its ordering procedures. Thus, according to Lévi-Strauss, although the basic structure or movement of primitive logic is the unification of opposites, the correlation of differences through pairing or binary thinking, this movement takes place in many ways and on many levels. In primitive logic objects can be paired in terms of contiguity and/or resemblance. These, in turn, are "many-valued" terms. That is, resemblances can be based on considerations that are sensory (similar smells), metaphoric (bird cries), or almost anything else (among the Luapula of South India, the function of construction links bees and carpenters); contiguity, on the other hand, can be based on a juxtaposition which is diachronic or synchronic, static or dynamic. In addition, primitive logic will pair things which are compatible and things which are incompatible, objects whose presence excludes one another as well as objects whose activities include one another. And so on. Thus, although the "logic of the concrete," as Lévi-Strauss calls it, is a procedure of thought which orders and introduces system into what appears disordered and systemless, it does so in many different and subtle ways.

Nonetheless, once one grasps the way this logic "goes," all the classificatory schemas which operate within primitive societies become theoretically susceptible of analysis, since all of them make use of the same logical principles, or variants of these principles. Not only, for example, are colors, smells, foods, animals, plants and inanimate objects associated in terms of resemblance and contiguity but natural events (e.g., sunrise or sun-

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set), a region of space (e.g., the sky), an animal activity (e.g., the cry of a bird), and human events (e.g., a man dies, a pregnant woman's body swells) are also given "meaning" in terms of the same principles in that they are associated with events which resemble or are contiguous with them (in any one of the number of ways two entities or events can be resembling or contiguous). These various classifications or quasi-classifications are thus *structurally* isomorphic, or at least are constructed in terms of the same set of logical principles.

Furthermore, just as the theoretical impulse behind these classifications is the unification of multiplicity, the establishment of connections among separate entities, so the impulse of society, so to speak (an unconscious impulse analogous to the "unconscious" grammar of a language) is the creation of liaison structures among its various component parts; thus, Lévi-Strauss argues, borrowing an insight from Marcel Mauss, relations among sub-groups within society, like exogamous ties or the ritualistic interchange of gifts, all serve the same end and are governed by the same logic. In each of these cases atomic units are taken up into a structure which makes them parts of an organic whole. As such they are homologous and intertranslatable.

Once social reality is conceived in this way as a logical system, any number of logical relations among social phenomena becomes apparent. Thus, a structure which has been used on one level with respect to a certain content can be transposed onto another level with respect to a different content. For example, food prohibitions —based upon a belief in the reincarnation of an ancestor in the form of a plant or an animal— reappear on the level of language as a prohibition against uttering any of the homophones of the name of the deceased. Or a structure which has appeared in one tribe can appear as an inverted or transformed structure in a different tribe. In certain tribes, before a man dies he sometimes indicates the animal in whose form he will be reincarnated; this becomes the animal which his descendants are henceforth forbidden to eat. In other tribes, a child will observe a food prohibition connected with an animal which the village "wise men" had associated with his mother's pregnancy. The content of these "systems"—food prohibitions, notions of reincarnation, etc.—can vary enormously, but the structures, the forms they assume, recur throughout, though sometimes in shapes which are transmuted versions of one another; and since these transmuted structures, according to Lévi-Strauss, are logically related, they admit, once we have learned the logical principles behind them, of structural interpretation. Hence, if we could gather all the data relating to a tribe's techno-economic, social, and religious structures, we could, with the help of a computer, determine all the logical principles at work in the ordering techniques of that tribe and show these structures and that society to be like a vast set of logically generated transformations. Using logic, cybernetics, game theory, and the like, the anthropologist can "unlock" the primitive society.

PRIMITIVE LOGIC, then, however subtle, variable, and kaleidoscopically shifting it may be, *is certainly a logic*. Moreover, according to Lévi-Strauss, it is an ". . . elementary logic . . . the least common denominator of all thought . . . an original logic. . . ." As such, it is a logic which lies not only behind primitive thought (that is to say, all the ordering systems which primitive thought elaborates, as well as the structures of primitive life), but behind *all* thought and *all* life. And because it is omnipresent, it follows that there is really no such thing as "The Primitive Mind," or "The Modern Mind"; there is only "Mind-As-Such." To be sure, "Mind-As-Such" exhibits different contents at different times (primitive science, for instance, deals with the secondary properties of things while modern science deals with the primary properties of things), but its structures do not vary (in the cases of both primitive and modern science different contents are ordered and systematized in terms of opposition, contiguity, resemblance, etc.). We might add that it is the belief in such a Mind, or the efficacy of believing in such a Mind, with its invariant structures, that has convinced Lévi-Strauss that he can construct a model of Man and Society which will encompass all men and all societies. Indeed, it is just such a model which his work as a whole is an attempt to construct. By legitimizing the search for this model, or for closer and closer approximations to it (an activity which, although not antagonistic to empirical research, is *not* empirical research), Lévi-Strauss has significantly affected modern anthropological inquiry.

Lévi-Strauss's account of the savage mind is, of course, not immune from criticism; indeed, the very range and daring of his claims render debate probable. One can, for example, wonder whether he has not confused a phase of a developed science, that of classifying, with the essence of a developed science, that of constructing theoretical entities or models. Few would doubt —certainly in the light of the evidence Lévi-Strauss presents—that primitives classify or that primitives classify (at least some of the time) for the *sake* of classifying, i.e., that they are driven by a theoretical and not merely by a utilitarian interest. And, I suppose—although here there would be some controversy—many would at least be responsive to Lévi-Strauss's speculations, carefully hedged as they are, about the isomorphism which exists be-

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tween the primary and secondary qualities of things, between what appears and what is inferred. In the area of epistemology, philosophers since Berkeley have been skeptical about the legitimacy of the distinction altogether; and psychologically, men have always balked somewhat at the notion that their perceptions and feelings yield up only a "subjective" reality, a realm of "phenomenal" events which exist only "in" and "for" their minds. The bias in favor of the given, of what is directly perceived and felt, is not something we have outgrown. Many of us still can't really believe that the colors and tastes and smells of things are not really real, or that what looks like human behavior in animals is really a mechanical response to a mechanical stimulus, or that what we introspect as our reasons for acting are not really the springs of our action. This, in the broadest sense of the word, "explains" why philosophers like Bergson, Whitehead, Dewey, Peirce, James, and Husserl have refused to succumb to the rationalized Parmenidean universe of science.

Yet even if we grant all this—that the primitive classifies, that the method he uses in classifying is formally congruent with the methods of modern science, and that he classifies for the sake of classifying—it does not necessarily follow that primitive science is full-blown science. One feels somewhat hesitant here since the meaning of science is not unequivocal and since the term is, to a degree, normative as well as descriptive. Nevertheless, it is commonly agreed that what is fundamental to developed, full-blown science—modern science—is not *classification* but *explanation*, and that the core of modern science is the construction of explanatory models and the testing of them through the verification of their implied, observable consequences. Notwithstanding the difficulties philosophers of science have run into in trying to pin down the concept of explanation, one thing is clear: *classification is not explanation*, and an inquiry into nature which merely classifies is not a scientific inquiry in the full sense of that term.

Thus, contrary to Lévi-Strauss, it is tempting to say that primitive science provided "Mind-As-Such" with a long period of time during which it looked at nature and, after a fashion, classified it. That this was a necessary precondition *for* science goes without saying; but *because it did only this* primitive science must be thought of as a precursor to a more profound inquiry into nature, i.e., as a precursor to, and not an equal of, modern science.

The issue is sharpened when we recognize that, in its most general sense, Lévi-Strauss's entire enterprise is at odds with his thoughts about primitive science. For if the essence of science is classification then the field that he himself engages in, anthropology, is something other than, or more than, science. For surely what Lévi-Strauss does is not classification; rather, in constructing models of "Mind-As-Such," he is seeking to delineate the set of invariant structures behind all human thought and life. This is an activity which transcends mere classification and reintroduces the very distinction he is seeking to eliminate. Conversely, if what Lévi-Strauss does is science, then what the primitive does is not science but rather a phase in the development of science. This is a crucial distinction.

In addition, we might also question the value of Lévi-Strauss's rationalism. As we saw, the forms of human thought and life are for him, in the end, determined by rational and logical principles. When primitive man thinks, his thought is logical. To be sure, the logic at work is not a conventional logic; it is a "concrete," "felt," "aesthetic" logic; it is "many-valued" and turns on many "axes." Nevertheless, it reveals itself to such conventional logical techniques as those of game theory, cybernetics, structural linguistics, and the logic of classes. It is thus sytematic, it is not antagonistic to the laws of Aristotelian logic, and, more generally, it constitutes an ordering system which is both amenable to and reconstructable in terms of linear, sequential, "ordinary" thought. In addition, notwithstanding the complexities involved, it can be seen according to Lévi-Strauss that social phenomena like totemism, gift-giving, or the exogamous relations among clans, are determined by rational ends, i.e., the ends of societal order, stability, and coherence. Thus the image which emerges of man and society is of an organism which has set itself rational goals and has chosen rational, or what it takes to be rational, means to achieve these goals.

BEFORE ENTERING upon a criticism of Lévi-Strauss's rationalism, one must, first of all, bear in mind what he is *not* implying by this term. He does not, for instance, mean that men always reach conclusions which are rational or that social phenomena are always produced by means of careful rational deliberation. To interpret him in his fashion would be to misperceive the level of generality in his rationalism. Lévi-Strauss is not talking about the *content* of human thought and life but about its form: it is not the material, the "filling," but the structure of these phenomena that he would call rational and logical. Thus, from the point of view of their structures, as classificatory and ordering systems of nature, modern and primitive science are both logical and rational just as primitive and modern kinship systems, as classificatory and ordering systems within society, are both logical and rational. Once we recognize the nature of Lévi-Strauss's rationalism, its generality and formality, we should

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be less intuitively opposed to it; at the same time, however, we should also be less concerned or intellectually engaged with it. For given its generality and its abstractness, it seems to be a claim about man that at times borders on the trivial and insignificant and at times arbitrarily stretches and mishandles the meanings of terms. Is it not trivial to say that primitive and modern science are alike because they both are mechanisms which order nature? Considered as ordering mechanisms, *any* two human inquiries into nature are alike: men always order in some way or other when they inquire, even if they do so in a disorderly fashion. And do we not arbitrarily stretch and mishandle the meaning of the term "logic" if we apply it to both what Russell and Whitehead did in *Principia Mathematica* and to what the primitive does in divining bird cries or attributing medicinal value to spiders? Is it not trivial to say that primitive and modern kinship systems or marriage prescriptions are alike because they both are mechanisms which order relations among the elements within a society? What social institution *isn't* such a mechanism? Do we not, finally, arbitrarily stretch the meaning of the term "rational," if we use it to denote both a system which marks and codes distinctions and relations within a society metaphorically, and a system which marks and codes such distinctions and relations non-metaphorically? Surely the term "rational" denotes the latter and has as a boundary condition that it cannot be used of the former. To say that the former system is rational but relies on the imagination, while the latter system is rational but relies on the intellect is like saying that all humans are males but some are he-males and some are she-males.

One might set this latter point against a different background. Intuitively, we believe that man is both rational and irrational. Man is rational when he practices science and irrational when he relies on magic; man is rational when he uses his intelligence to decide the future course of events and irrational when he continues to rely on the mechanisms or institutions of magic. Now it is precisely this which Lévi-Strauss seems to deny. It would seem that these antitheses or oppositions have no place in his model. For according to that model man is rational both in practicing science *and* in relying on magic; man is rational both in using intelligence *and* in not using it; man is rational both in discarding ineffective mechanisms or institutions and in not discarding them. Surely the term "rational" is being misused when it is employed to identify such diverse, even contradictory human actions.

Finally, we might wonder at the discontinuity between nature and man which Lévi-Strauss's theories seem to imply. For in his rejection of the coming-into-being of man, in his insistence that man *qua* "Mind-As-Such" always was, he in effect is rejecting the existence of pre-humans who mediated the transition from nature to man. That is, in rejecting the notion that the primitive was a "Savage," a preman, he is also rejecting the notion that man as we know him evolved through a series of human-like forms.

Now, to be sure, the claim that there is discontinuity within nature is no longer objectionable (at an earlier time this would have been thought to be virtually a logical impossibility). Indeed in areas like sub-atomic physics and quantum mechanics discontinuity has virtually become a confirmed fact. There are, however, two considerations that must be dealt with. First, the discontinuity for which Lévi-Strauss argues allegedly occurred on the macroscopic level. Yet on this level all our experience points to the omnipresence of continuity, and in deference to this omnipresence, physicists have generally confined discontinuity to the microscopic sub-atomic level. The discontinuity which Lévi-Strauss alleges is thus exceedingly counter-intuitive. Second, Lévi-Strauss does not deal with the possibility that the discontinuity within nature which he proposes may not be a discontinuity at all, but rather a result of our inability to find those pre-human forms which would fill in the gap and eliminate the discontinuity, or even a result of our way of looking at and investigating primitives. That is, it may be that the alleged discontinuity is in fact a result of our inquiry's being incomplete or distorting, and not at all an objective fact about nature. (This was precisely the response of many to the finding of discontinuity in physics.) The importance of this possibility is obvious: one cannot ascribe to nature what is properly a consequence of one's method of inquiry. But Lévi-Strauss, even though he seems clearly aware of the issue—indeed he speaks of it often in *Tristes Tropiques**—nonetheless seems essentially to disregard it. Moreover, his commitment to the construction of the model of "Mind-As-Such" seems not to *allow* him to consider it seriously, for the logic of models and of model-making tends to subvert the subjective-objective distinction. This is why all model-making—Lévi Strauss's, it seems to me, not excepted—runs the risk of becoming arbitrary and subjective, of becoming, in some cases, sheer speculation and indulgence in metaphysics.

LEVI-STRAUSS'S BELIEF in the existence of a Super-Mind, i.e., a quasi-Kantian set of invariant structures which all minds, and products of minds like societies, exhibit, leads him to some interesting reflections about human history. In a general sense his theory of history is anti-Marxian. This is all the more interesting since he

* Atheneum, 404 pp., $2.85.

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often has suggested that his thought is greatly indebted to Marx. Thus, In *Tristes Tropiques,* he says:

> . . . rarely do I tackle a problem in sociology or ethnology without having first set my mind in motion by a re-perusal of a page or two from the *18 Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* or the *Critique of Political Economy.*

And in *The Savage Mind,* speaking of Sartre, he says that " . . . in both our cases Marx is the point of departure of our thought." Nonetheless, at bottom, his thought moves in quite a different direction from that of Marx. What separates them is their respective attitudes toward historical change.

For Marx it seems clear that history is developmental. Man unfolds in history, and, like a seed, slowly comes to fruition. Moreover, the forms of life and of social organization at any given time are a function of the distance yet to be traveled and of the obstacles which impede, but paradoxically also further, the process; although dialectical, history for Marx is progressive. Time measures the progress of history; if it contains the seeds of contradiction, it also contains the seeds of consummation.

For Levi-Strauss, on the other hand, it would seem that history and time are not developmental and progressive; they do not lead to successively better states of society and relations among men or even to a basic alteration of man's modes of consciousness and styles of living. (It is, by the way, on this point, although not solely on this point, that Lévi-Strauss criticizes Sartre in the last chapter of *The Savage Mind.* For Sartre, at bottom, retains a Marxian view of time and history. Thus, for example, Sartre distinguishes superior and inferior modes of consciousness in terms of historical position and context, and he is unwilling to grant that the primitive possesses "complex understanding" since such understanding could not have existed at that level of historical development.) For Lévi-Strauss, history is a series of combinations or clusters of modes of consciousness and life, individual and social, spread out in time. These different clusters represent the different contents or events which "fill in" the structures of "Mind-As-Such" in different historical epochs. Thus the existence of totemic clans, exogamy, gift-giving, etc. in the particular "piece" of history occupied by a primitive group represents the content or set of events in terms of which "Mind-As-Such" has "organicized" these particular group of men living in that particular time. Those combinations which actually become manifest represent only some of the combinations which *could* have come about. The set of possible modes of consciousness and life is probably large but finite.* The diversity they exhibit, however, should not hide the fact that behind them, like Plato's Forms and Hegel's Categories, stand the invariant and recurring structures which they subserve and from which they derive their reality.

Lévi-Strauss rarely deals with the factors which lie beneath the structures of "Mind-As-Such." He does, however, speak of phenomena like demographic expansion, wars, drought, etc., as the generative factors underlying empirical change. Yet all these seem in the end reducible to the physical forces of nature. Thus, in speaking of the laws of primitive logic, the "original" and "elementary" logic which is the source of all thought, Lévi-Strauss remarks that these laws are ". . . a direct expression of the structure of the mind (and behind the mind, probably of the brain)." And lest the parenthetical "probably" be misconstrued, he goes on to say in *The Savage Mind:*

> . . . the ultimate goal of the human sciences (is) not to constitute, but to dissolve man. The preeminent nature of anthropology is that it represents the first step in a procedure which involves others. Ethnographic analysis tries to arrive at invariants beyond the empirical diversity of human societies. . . . However, it would not be enough to reabsorb particular humanities into a general one. This first enterprise opens the way for others . . . which are incumbent upon the exact natural sciences: the reintegration of culture in nature and finally of life within the whole of its physico-chemical conditions.

And, he adds, "the opposition between nature and culture . . . seems to be of primarily methodological importance."

The activities of the physical energies which govern all things have no point, no goal, no consummation; equally as surely one cannot speak of them as "progressing." And since these activities underlie the empirical and structural events which constitute human history, that history in turn cannot be said to progress. History and time are merely the space within which, on one level, the structures of Mind and the contents of those structures, exhibit their respective permutations and combinations. We have thus not progressed beyond the primitive; we have merely turned up on a different roll of the dice.

Now this vision of man and history, Lucretian in its broad outlines, can have a purgative and cathartic effect; it can loosen the grip of existence. Seen from the Olympian, timeless perspective of

* Thus, speaking of customs in *Tristes Tropiques*: "The ensemble of a people's customs has always its particular style; they form into systems. I am convinced that the number of these systems is not unlimited, and that human societies, like individual human beings . . . never create *absolutely;* all they can do is to choose certain combinations from a repertory of ideas which it should be possible to reconstitute . . . one could eventually establish a periodic chart of . . . elements analagous to that devised by Mendeleier. In this, all customs, whether real or possible, would be grouped by families, and all that would remain for us to do would be to recognize those which societies had . . . adopted.

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structuralism, our concrete concerns—our hopes, our struggles, our despairs—lose their flesh and blood, their urgency. The reality of our strivings and our failures, of our struggles with ourselves and others over principles and ideals, of our moral visions and political revolutions—in short, our humanity—fades, and like a God (or a crab) we are released from the demands and anxieties of being human. Seeing it all from this remote, transcendent vantage-point produces a detachment, a disinterest, a purely theoretical frame of mind: our passions are subdued, calmed, muted. It would be folly if, knowing this truth about things human, one remained within the frustrating, painful world of the passions. In understanding and resigning before the reality of what is—the reality of human insignificance and cosmic indifference—man fulfills his destiny: self-realization lies in the adjustment of our humanity to our intellect.

THUS, IF Lévi-Strauss's structuralism is Marxian, it is because it accepts Marx's demand that man be studied scientifically; its heresy, on the other hand, from a Marxian point of view, is its abstract, idealist conception of man as non-historical, non-social, non-existential Mind, and its undialectical mechanistic materialism which minimizes the reality of human purposes and principles, reads history as indifferent to such purposes and principles, and places no obligation upon us to work for them. In these rejections lies the offensiveness of structuralism—its trivialization of our deepest instincts.

But to find structuralism offensive is neither to disprove it factually nor even to judge it wrong on the basis of some (necessarily relative) set of moral values. For structuralism makes no factual claim but rather offers a way of interpreting facts; and any formative appraisal of it must of necessity be relative and arbitrary. Nevertheless, one cannot but be struck by its many internal irregularities and inconsistencies. While rejecting the reality of the passions, structuralism passionately seeks release from them; while denying the reality of man's earthliness and finitude, it not only commits itself to a disciplined study of these phenomena but plays them off as a means of enlisting support for itself; while it implies an apolitical posture, it, in effect, pragmatically, seems to support the status quo and to express an ideology as conservative as historical Catholicism; while it implicitly prescribes that man seek fulfilment in intellect, it denounces prescription; while it concerns itself with the forms and structures of human thought and life and, indirectly, minimizes the reality of the content of human thought and life, it presents us nevertheless with its own clear message, namely, the dignity of the intellect and the folly of the passions; and while denying the existence of cross-cultural Truth, it solemnly, even scientifically, announces its existence. All these inconsistencies within structuralism testify to the unavoidable reality of the very things which structuralism seeks to minimize and discredit.*

Is then, after all this, primitive man a savage different *in kind* from us, or is he essentially identical with us? The work of Lévi-Strauss does not provide us with the answer—but then neither does the work of any anthropologist. This, however, should produce a cynicism about anthropology within us only if we misconceive the nature of the question, that is, if we believe it to be a rather straightforward empirical question amenable to the methods of scientific inquiry. It should be clear by now that the matter is not at all as simple as that. Rather, the nature of the question is perhaps best defined by its resemblance to such perennial philosophical questions as, "What is man?" "What is nature?" and "What is the relation between man and nature?" And with respect to these questions it is as important that we confront them and *attempt* to answer them as it is that we answer them conclusively. For only in that continuing confrontation do we define and redefine ourselves; and only by grappling with these questions of identity do we create an identity worth bothering about.

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* This conception of man and history seems to involve two apparently incompatible philosophical views. On the one hand, in saying that man and human history are reducible to chemistry and physics, Lévi-Strauss is speaking like a materialist. On the other hand, in maintaining that man and human history are governed by the forms and categories, the invariant and recurring structures of Mind-As-Such, he is speaking like an idealist. And these two views, unless they are substantially qualified, contradict each other.

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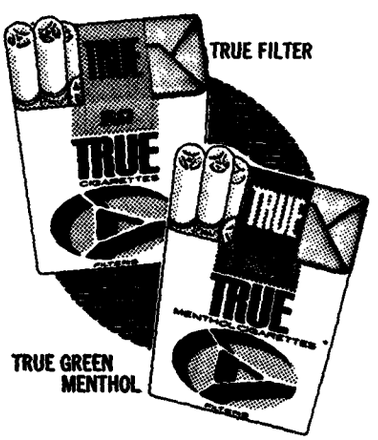
Social Worker

There is a monument on Henry Street on New York's Lower East Side. It is the Henry Street Settlement House and it is a monument to the vision and dedication of a great American woman, Lillian Wald.

Born in 1867, Lillian decided early in her life that she wanted to help people. Accordingly, she took nurses' training at the New York Training School for Nursing. Appalled by the dreadful conditions then prevalent among the immigrant population of the Lower East Side, Miss Wald and another nurse, Mary Brewster, established a nursing and sanitation service for the underprivileged, using their own apartment as headquarters. This service grew and ultimately became the Visiting Nurses' Service, which continues to furnish assistance to the needy sick in their homes today.

In 1885 Lillian Wald established the Henry Street Settlement House—originally called the Nurses' Settlement—with the assistance of the well-known philanthropist, Jacob H. Schiff. To this haven for the bewildered and friendless came streams of immigrants. To the children she was mother, friend and defender. Through her efforts, classes for ungraded children were first established in the New York City schools. To the adults, strangers in a new land, she was friend, counsellor and teacher, for, in addition to the visiting nurses' service, Lillian made available social activities and education.

Lillian Wald's advocacy resulted in the creation of the Federal Children's Bureau in 1912, a landmark in social service. Her 70th birthday was celebrated nationally. Her death, in 1940, evoked tributes from the leading figures in the United States. Her life, however, is her true monument.



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Metaphysical Obduracy

Kathleen Nott

THERE IS A class of popular theological books today which looks like a literal Godsend, or must do so to publishers. These are not by any means all professional theological statements. Recently they have often taken the form of a symposium of mixed amateurs and professionals, or of an "Objector" series—"Objections" to Christian Belief, to Roman Catholicism, written by the faithful of each variety.* (The British publisher of the series also, quite properly, published an "Objections to Humanism.")

What these books and statements (we have them also over radio and TV) have in common is a total "open-mindedness" toward the intellectual and moral foundations of Christian theology. These Christian believers go out prepared to meet all possible "objections" squarely; if need be to meet their "Death of God."

They have, however, another thing in common—after the most radical demolition work, the edifice appears to be actually strengthened, although it may be standing on different grounds. A skeptic might call this a miracle. †

There is a significant difference in attitude between the Roman Catholics and the Protestants. ("Christian Belief" in the "Objections" series mostly refers to Anglicanism.) The Protestants certainly enumerate, whether they logically face them or not, all the "objections," including the epistemological and ontclogical, and continue to move around, even if with a circular motion, among the draughty ruins. The Roman Catholics remain firmly inside their Church and comfortably beg the whole important question. It is not the credibility or historicity of their faith that they regard as being challenged, but the acceptability and permanence of their Church in its historical development.**

Within these limits, their arguments are often better than those of the Protestants, for the simple reason that they are not attempting to defend a logically indefensible position. It is true that in his introduction to *Objections to Roman Catholicism,* Michael de la Bedoyere talks about a "true conscience" and the "right of thinking freely" —and "personal integrity and honesty." But it becomes obvious in the book that what Roman Catholics now have the right to think freely about is not "God" but how, following Pope John, to bring the Church up to date and thus increase its influence. "The essential moral and spiritual teaching of the Church cannot change." So we have essays on "The Worldly Church" on "Censorship," on "Contraception and War," and the like. "Reflections on Superstition and Credulity" and "Existential Reactions against Scholasticism" look hopeful for readers in search of either a realistic and logical case for a Christian theology or a realistic admission that such cannot be made. In fact, the way in which certain cults and practices may diminish the worth and status of God (without bearing upon His existence) forms the substance of the first of these two essays—some supernaturalistic assumptions, some signs and wonders, e.g., that "devils appear in the form of dogs and that archangels shake their golden curls" not only "lead people into materialistic piety of the grossest kind," they prevent the true *revelation* of the "Kingdom of God."

In the second essay, the "existential" doubts or objections are "summed up very shortly as follows":—the Scholastics (headed by Aquinas) "regard knowledge as being the result of reasoning, instead of being . . . the outcome of our union with all being, finite and infinite."

This writer, G. F. Pollard, a Catholic philosopher, also cites St. Thomas as belonging to the *agnostic* tradition, because he implies that knowledge requires intellectual and conscious assent, and that Theory of Knowledge cannot include "mystical illumination" (or as Pollard calls it elsewhere, rather like Pascal, "ecstatic reasoning"). Pollard assumes that modern psychology (meaning depth-analysis and theory of the unconscious) "bears out the deepest experience of the mystics" and supports a kind of "non-rational knowledge."

It must be admitted that this writer is in open and flat contradiction to the professed aim of the series—he isn't even pretending to look for "objections":

> The aim and object of this essay is a positive one; namely to endeavor to show forth "the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" which are contained within the Roman tradition.

Nevertheless, it isn't what he was asked. We may begin to wonder whether the typical dialectical method of Roman theology, anyway for popular consumption, is not an "*ignoratio elenchi*"—to "answer" a logical refutation by proving or disproving something else. "Objections" *inside* the Church may be

KATHLEEN NOTT, *the well-known English novelist and essayist, reviewed Jean-Paul Sartre's* The Words *in the February 1965* COMMENTARY.

* The series has been published here by Lippincott and includes: *Objections to Christian Belief,* ed. by D. M. MacKinnon; *Objections to Humanism,* ed. by H.J. Blackham, and *Objections to Roman Catholicism,* ed. by Michael de la Bedoyere—ED.

† This is not an entirely new phenomenon: what has changed is that it now appears against a background of serious professional German theology. From the angle of a surprised skeptic I noticed the phenomenon some years ago in connection with T. S. Eliot's conversion and christened it *The Landlady's Ornaments*: "Mr. Eliot reminds me of a dignified landlady who without a word retrieves the tribal ornaments from the cupboard where the guest has hidden them and puts them back on the mantelpiece."

** Generally, with only doubtful exceptions, there is a similarity to this Catholic position in the Jewish attitude, as revealed in the symposium "The State of Jewish Belief" (COMMENTARY, August 1966).

The rabbis and the theological teachers who reply to the questions put by COMMENTARY regard them hardly at all as implying any challenge to their belief in the real existence of God. There are one or two glancing blows at the limitations of man's reason and the pretensions of science: "Science is no longer satisfied to remain a method. It becomes scientism, a totalitarian outlook" (Jakob J. Petuchowski). And disapproval of "scientism" is in one or two cases combined with the claim that a valid morality needs divine sanction: "If man were to rely exclusively on purely scientific meth-

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carried to an extreme; but the kicks are all intra-uterine and only confirm the Mother's vitality.

THERE IS ONE other essay in this collection which needs rather closer pondering, because of the comparative subtlety and originality of the author, Rosemary Haughton, which she has exhibited more fully in other books, contributory essays, and broadcasts, and also because of her present standing as a highly regarded Catholic theologian. From the title of her essay it might appear quite proper that she should only be discussing the due ratio of freedom of thought and act, on the one hand, and ecclesiastical authority on the other. Still, the existential-theological question is begged. The old assumption that totally free intellectual inquiry is a *sin* is hidden, but it remains: "The honest reformer builds up the Church, even when he appears to be in conflict with her." Freedom is still only *within* the Church.

The typical literature suggests that Catholics are not capable of free "objections," that they never leave the intellectual structure of their Church. And indeed the recent fashion of walk-outs supports this belief. The English priest Charles Davis, who renounced orders this year and subsequently married, and who has been described as the most distinguished Roman Catholic theologian in the country, quitted the Church but not God.

In her book, *The Transformation of Man* (1967), Rosemary Haughton manages to disguise the usual theological assumptiveness and question-begging, or at any rate distracts a reader's attention from them, by a skillful deployment of psychological and rather novelistic detail. Her professed purpose is to make a distinction between "formation" and "transformation"—"formation" being moral education in the ordinary familial and social sense. "Formation," she says, is a necessary foundation to "transformation," but it is not in itself sufficient. Superficially this suggests the Pauline contrast between "works" and "faith" or even between "sounding brass" and "charity." But Mrs. Haughton, it becomes clear, means a good deal more than this. The episodes she describes in illustration in the first part of the book are all secular and appear deliberately commonplace, even trivial—a quarrel between children, an extramarital love-affair. Both sets of individuals are products of a "good" moral back-

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ods, he would be utterly bereft of any guidance in his quests for standards of value" (Walter S. Wurzburger). This does not appear (in the context of the symposium) to be typically Judaic; it is comparable to a common Christian attitude; but the claim in the Christian case is based on a "pattern" morality—it is the human pattern, Jesus, which initially was stamped with the genuinely divine imprint; and which implies and demands the sanction and support of a concrete and existent Deity.

Nothing of the sort seems to be entailed by Jewish theology and to the secular outsider there appears to be no reason why Jewish ethics should not be purely humanistic.

As with the Catholics, then, the "metaphysical" or philosophical question seems to be largely ignored—it certainly isn't answered. (In this respect there seems to be very little discernible difference among the Orthodox, the Conservative, and the Reform representatives of Judaism.) Yet in the first and last questions put to the participants in the symposium the problem is indubitably implied.

The first question: "In what sense do you believe the Torah to be a divine revelation? Are all 613 commandments equally binding on the believing Jew? gets, with almost complete generality, the reply that the Torah was initially God-given but was received only as understood by men, and was thereafter subject to human Rabbinic interpretation (and misinterpretation?).

The stock reply to COMMENTARY's last question: "Does the so-called 'God is dead' question which has been agitating Christian theologians have any relevance to Judaism?" is mostly a simple affirmation that this is by nature a Christian problem, and it is dealt with either by what must seem, to the inquiring skeptic, a willful blindness to the literal and common usage of this slogan-metaphor or by some far-fetched interpretation. Many preface this section of their remarks by saying that they don't know what it means, or that it is subject to various interpretations. And they propose: *God is hiding. Or: it is we who can't find Him or listen to Him.* Or (Eliezer Berkovits): "Either God or no God: if God is dead He was never alive." But isn't the commonest usage for "God is dead" a metaphor for "God never existed"? This, in any formulation, receives only the scantiest mention.

The general answer appears to be "faith-commitment"—i.e., *it is part of the definition of the belief of a believing Jew that God is* (and is One and unique). We can hardly then exonerate these presumably representative Jewish thinkers, any more than the Catholics, from question-begging.

However, in a literally worldly sense, there is a great gain over the Christians in practical wisdom; and inside the body of practicing Judaism (which looks practically coextensive with the theology) there is a great gain in logical consistency.

Some, it is true, have been affected by the Christian Existentialists and by the argument from absurdity which these are likely to favor—*I believe because it is absurd;* that is, in effect, because revelation is not accessible to human reason and must *therefore* manifest divine or higher reason (Immanuel Jakobovits in this is typical). I found one or two cases of "God as ultimate reality" which compares (see later) with Tillich's and Dr. John Robinson's ultimate "ground of our being." Examples: Ira Eisenstein, "The term 'God' has always stood for the reality behind the universe which makes human salvation possible"; or Herbert Weiner: ". . . the wellsprings of life, ultimate reality, God, whatever you like to call it."

But in general the Jewish attitude could hardly be more dissimilar to that of the "anguished" and obsessively "demolishing" Protestant. Once the first step of "faith-commitment" is taken, Judaism does not have to defend a logically indefensible position. There are no Homoiousian/Homoousian difficulties; no problems of historicity; no disturbances in practice about supernatural intervention. Thus in social and moral matters there is no necessary logical distortion of calm and rational commonsense nor even of sensible progressivism.

Nevertheless the One and Eternal God who handed over, for the rest of time and the world, both theology and ethics in one unrepeatable package-deal, is empty of content. Walter Wurzburger sees this difficulty—"I can fully appreciate the predicament of theologians who . . . find it intellectually embarrassing to subscribe to the belief that God actually communicated a specific content to man. . . . But for Jewish purposes, revelation cannot be divested of content, for this would for all practical purposes displace Torah from its pivotal position in the structure of Jewish faith experience." A strong flavor of question-begging!

On the whole it is difficult to see how "God" is other than a mere concept and a non-referential one at that. Isn't this what Robinson and others call "semantic superfluousness?" (Jacob J. Weinstein says "We are not semantic purists.") What in practice is the difference between ethical Judaism and secular humanism? In the symposium, indeed, secular humanists are occasionally admired: often on the Jourdainesque ground (which, we must note, appeals to the Catholic, Mrs. Rosemary Haughton, later discussed), that they are believers without knowing it. There is a suggestion of this in Emil L. Fackenheim's "believing Jew" who "may view the . . . [high-minded agnostic humanist] . . . as doing the will of God even though he recognizes no God."

[*Please return to text, col. 2, p. 63.*]

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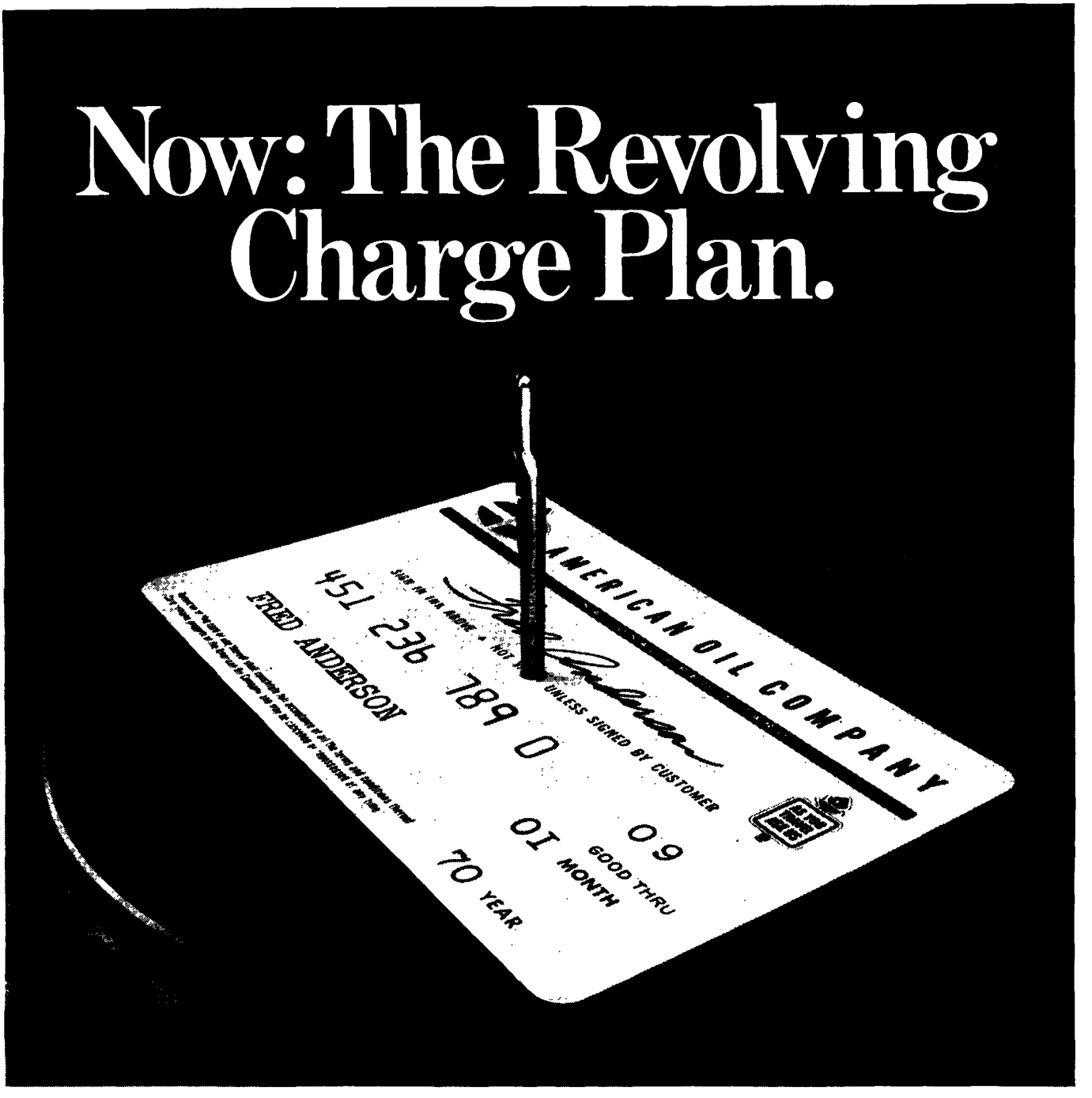

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ground. This, however, like all backgrounds, contains elements of conflict, which reappear in the relationships themselves.

The second case may be complicated too by conventional views of marriage which may have been absorbed during "formation." This should not mislead us here—while still believing and maintaining that true marriage is a Christian sacrament, Mrs. Haughton has chosen her example to illustrate among other things that an illegal union may "realize" more love, devotion, and loyalty than the blessing of the Church can inspire. The important point here is the moment of this "realization" and what causes it. This seems to require some "intervention" or "voice" but even here Mrs. Haughton remains within secular limits. The "intervener" may be a third party (the mother in the case of the quarreling children) or it may even be the lovers' own new understanding of the depths and significant implications of their relationship. At this point, "formation" changes to "transformation" —or in slightly more usual language, there is a conversion. (In the later part of her book, Mrs. Haughton turns to recorded examples of actual conversion.)

But all these "conversions" appear as sudden new forms of awareness: and they are significant because the people they "transform" are already of "good" character and potentiality. They introduce some factor of a quite different quality: and it becomes clear that Mrs. Haughton identifies this as the "sacred" or "noumenal."

We all know that "conversions" happen and that some of them are purely psychological (and some might even be termed "diabolical"). But Mrs. Haughton does not feel called upon to make the distinction between the theological and the psychological. Her main purpose is to show that the Church does not know how to enter into these ordinary experiences and make proper use of them, does not know how to "intervene." Her book is still an "Objection." As the blurb says—"Her contention is that if theology does not make sense in terms of ordinary experience then it has no meaning at all."

Many of us would agree—but her practical interpretation is the curiously inverted one that the business of the Church is to lay bare the actual theological content of ordinary living. And "formation," she says, "is for the unconverted. *It is designed to create conditions for the converting encounter.*" (My italics.)

This may strike us as blandly assumptive. The theology appears to have "intervened" remarkably and quite unaccountably in the purely secular and psychological description. Mrs. Haughton, however, writes very readably and very plausibly. I have used her book as an outstanding example of the Catholic method of treating the irreducible stubbornness of rational argument—"Take no notice and it will go away."

I am not writing just as an old dyed-in-the-wool Rationalist. Indeed, I think the orthodox Humanists ought to spend less time on disproving the existence of God and of the supernatural and more on the existence of human beings; this would include more attention to the important human values and to extracting for humane use the genuine aesthetic, moral, and psychological values to be found in the world-religions; it would mean also moving out of the mid-19th century into the present.

Nevertheless, the theological arguments (if you use them) still look bad to a skeptic. If you keep them in cold storage as Catholic apologists do, they do not get any better. This the more unfortunate Protestants at least know, and not only know, but confess, often with all the appropriate anguish, and driven, perhaps by the awful force of that individual conscience which burdens them, to a compulsive truth-speaking.

They really all say much the same sort of thing, no doubt because the range of fallacy is small and there isn't much possibility of novel argument. There is a type of argument which should be mentioned first, although it is not confined to Protestants; indeed, they do not as a rule overtly rely upon it. It is mainly employed by those who are less pessimistic of theological success; it certainly has had a considerable popular appeal, particularly as used by the "reconcilers" of religion and science. These include some of the supporters of Teilhard de Chardin, for example, the late Canon C. E. Raven and Claude Cuénot. (Some of the Evolutionary Humanists are not entirely blameless—Julian Huxley and C. E. Waddington have connived at the materialistic mysticism of Teilhard.)

THE "RECONCILIATION" finally depends on the fact that it is not scientists, but philosophers, who raise epistemological questions. The sciences work in a phenomenal world quite satisfactorily without having to "prove" or "disprove" existences. The fallacy of the "reconciler" may be called the Hypostasis of Negation: it assumes that if you haven't been actually shown that something is incredible, there is nothing to stop you believing it, as fact. The "reconcilers" have been greatly helped, as they think, by the Principle of Indeterminacy, which to them has meant that because there are certain irreducible (and regular and scientifically admitted) gaps in our experience and knowledge at certain levels, a vista is automatically cleared to the theological versions of "free will."

The "Hypostasis of Negation" is a disguised variant of Sherlock Holmes's no less fallacious argument: *When you have eliminated all the impossible, then what remains, however improbable, must be the truth.* Poor Watson had as much awe of Sherlock Holmes as the rest of us non-conformists still have for "God," and didn't think to answer: No, what remains is the not-impossible, which may be possible or even probable but isn't the ostensive or the self-evident (and these provided Holmes's standard of the "true").

But the "reconcilers" ignore the logic and method of scientific research which, as Karl Popper said, is a challenge to refutation and therefore excludes their own. The common usage of the word "agnostic" has made things easier for them—*I can't prove and therefore I don't "know"*—in this case, about the existence of God and the supernatural. But I do, or can, know about certain forms of logical exclusion and entailment, even about certain statistical probabilities and

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Principal Balance Sheet Items

	March 31, 1968	*March 31, 1967*
Assets	$1,504,437,000	$1,028,221,000
Deposits	1,302,800,000	875,505,000
Loans	919,356,000	633,265,000
Capital Funds	103,020,000	67,303,000
Reserves for Possible Loan Losses	28,075,000	22,570,000

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improbabilities. We are talking about, not "facts" or non-facts, in themselves, but about logical structure, about possible methods of reasoning. The problem becomes more distinct when we consider the approach to history both of the "reconcilers" and the "Objectors." Honest historians, surely, use a logic which is not incompatible with scientific methodology—they look for exclusions and entailments and they build only on probabilities. Their logic, in short, is a skeptical one; they "believe" only where they see reason. That doesn't mean that they employ a Cartesian technique of "doubting," only that they distinguish sharply between conjecture and likelihood.

Our recent Protestant "apologists" (that, for all their "open-mindedness" is what they inevitably if unintentionally become), seem to be often aware of what Watson ought to have said to Sherlock Holmes and even confess it out loud. A contortion results in their definition of belief (or of faith) which is curiously atavistic. They have now gone further than "I believe because you, the scientists and the anti-metaphysical philosophers and skeptics, don't *know* any more than I do, and so I can believe, till you disprove"—and reverted to Tertullian's logical attitude, in its popular form: I believe *because* it is impossible (or absurd). Among the Roman Catholics, Mrs. Haughton adheres to the Tertullian position fairly openly. In another symposium, *What I Believe,* we find her saying: "A religious tradition that bristles with absurdities may provide the one absolutely essential requirement of the human heart if it is to be able to go out unaided to whatever adventures await it." But then she is a maverick if not heretical.

This fallacy, the *quia absurdum,* has a long and ramified history: in particular, the assumption that everything which is not "rational" and "conscious," is unconscious and "irrational" has been greatly helped by the logical compartmentalism of both Freud and Jung. And this typical *Either/Or* is to be found in the Existentialist dichotomy of the rational and the absurd (and notably in the Sartrean psychology).

In *Objections to Christian Belief* we have Dr. A. R. Vidler (Dean of King's College, Cambridge and lecturer in Ecclesiastical History):

> Christians do not assert, or they never ought to assert, that the truth of their beliefs can be demonstrated with certainty. If that were so, they would no longer be beliefs but knowledge. Christians would no longer be walking by faith but by sight.

Is not that at least perilously near to the implication that you cannot "believe" what you also *know*—or indeed that the actual merit of Christian faith depends in part upon ignorance? Doesn't it, if expanded to be visible by the naked eye of honesty, mean: I don't and never shall know, in a normal epistemological or an ostensive sense, the categories of theology; I recognize that knowing depends on reasonable inferences from experience and that my theological assumptions can't be fitted into this category. But I won't give them up; *ergo,* nothing remains but to "believe" (or trust, or have faith).

Vidler also tries to undercut any scientific method of historical investigation. About the historicity of the Christian story he says that we all have to rely on experts in all sorts of matters and as a result can be reasonably certain of much that is undemonstrable—for instance, of William the Conqueror and 1066. He admits, moreover, that the experts disagree or can be wrong and that theologians as well as historians show bias. In the end we are told that we "cannot make up our minds about the story of Jesus without viewing it in its total context . . . without taking into account the Old Testament of which it purports to be a fulfillment and . . . the subsequent history of the Christian movement."

This quotation alone should make it clear that Dr. Vidler has shifted his ground from history to values. And the *ignoratio elenchi,* the "answering" of one objection by dealing with another, becomes more obvious in his conclusion: that, in spite of what the historians and the theologians have or have not done or shown, the "authentic personality of Jesus makes its enduring and inescapable impact—while participation in the community of believers brings its own certainty."

In the concluding essay of this collection ("Intellectual Objections"), J. S. Bezzant (St. John's College, Cambridge, lecturer on the Old Testament) exhaustively states and effectively accepts all the historical objections as well; but he adds that he still has hopes of a natural theology. And the unique personality of Christ, as an experienced fact, is again put forward, surely in circular fashion, as the historical and logical answer. Without apparently observing that he has shifted from the logical to the evaluative, he arrives at the conclusion that:

> . . . there is nothing that can be called *knowledge* or *reasonable* belief that can possibly justify . . . such a colossal condemnation on this inconceivably vast and mysterious universe as is implied in the judgment that it has no meaning or value . . . it is entirely *reasonable* for any man who studies the spirit of the facing of life as Christ faced it and his recorded teaching, to decide that by him . . . he will stand . . . rather than join in a possible triumph of any evil over him. (My italics.)

In the context of the essay, these statements are in logical, not merely typographical juxtaposition. In short the writer means: By rational argument we can arrive at the meaningfulness and value of the universe; this meaningfulness and value are to be equated with the personality and history of Christ (because to believe anything else would affirm the triumph of evil).

In another recent "Objections" book of rather larger scale and scope—for the author objects to all the humanist or non-religious alternatives too—Leslie Paul provides a short but radical demolition of the demolition experts, the "new" theologians. In this book, *Alternatives to Christian Belief,** Mr. Paul asserts, reasonably, I think, that they all revert to the divinization of Christ, however they may disguise the transformation However, his concluding argument is on the same logical footing as theirs—it is a re-

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version to the "uniqueness" of Christ's personality:

> Not even the most radical secular assessments within the Church leave Jesus on the same footing as Socrates, or Buddha. He remains mysterious and elemental in his power and glory; himself the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans.*

But that questions of historicity and epistemology are really involved, the "new" theologians will admit out of one corner of their mouth while they deny it out of the other. They admit (for instance, Vidler) that the ordinary Christian belief of the ordinary Christian believer includes the belief in the Man-Godhead of an actual historical Jesus. But their sense is often Pickwickian and their language Humpty-Dumpty.

Let us look at Dr. John Robinson, Bishop of Woolwich, whose *Honest to God* (1963) has by now sold over a million copies and has been translated into twelve languages. With confessed reluctance, the Bishop is still one of the most radical demolition-workers. Long before he has finished, in fact in his earlier chapters, there is nothing left of the "supranatural" or of any God who is either "up there" or "out there." (The wording, which is Dr. Robinson's own, is important.) "Up there" hardly counts any longer, since most people are acclimatized to a post-Copernican cosmography. But "out there" (in a cosmos which may be expanding for all most of us know) has a less mythological sound. Dr. Robinson will have none of either. But there is something about the pattern of his arguments which makes the skeptic wonder whether the "openness" of this total demolition-worker is not after all an attempt to palm the continuing openness of all questions, including the logical and epistemological. It looks like the "reconcilers" again—all roads are still open unless they are marked, by acceptable authority, "closed."

Dr. Robinson says, plausibly enough, that if there were an entity "out there" whose being "could be proved beyond dispute" it would not be God, it would merely be a further "piece of existence" that might conceivably not have been there—"or a demonstration would not have been required." Dr. Robinson means that all "existence" is contingent and that he will accept nothing short of a logically necessary "God." However, this is the last "objection" which he admits, before he moves to what he finds acceptable.

Dr. Robinson's arguments are rarely his own; they are in the contemporary "tradition" of demolition. He may argue one side or the other, for instance, with Bultmann, the "demythologizer" of Christianity, and with Bonhoeffer, who wants to remove the "religion" from Christian religion, but he still moves toward adopting their final God-saving solution as a means of camping out among the secularized ruins. This is particularly notable in his reliance upon Paul Tillich, who provides the platform on to which Robinson promptly steps after knocking down the last bit of the old building.

ONE OF THE possibilities about which Robinson is "open-minded" is "semantic superfluousness"—if God is not after all "up there" or "out there" or any*where*, do we need the "category of God" at all? This is a question that both skeptics and orthodox believers are likely to ask. Nevertheless, we get no firm answer, one way or the other. It seems God does not exist in any sense we can recognize as either necessary or contingent:

> . . . We must start the other way round. God is, by definition [whose definition?] ultimate reality. And one cannot argue whether ultimate reality *exists.* One can only ask what ultimate reality is like—whether, for instance, in the last analysis, what lies at the heart of things and governs their working is to be described in personal or impersonal categories . . . the fundamental theological question consists not in establishing the "existence" of God as a separate entity but in pressing through in ultimate concern to what Tillich calls "the ground of our being."

According to Tillich (quoted by Robinson from *The Shaking of the Foundations*):

> The name of this infinite and inexhaustible ground of history is *God* . . . if these words do not have much meaning for you, translate them, and speak of the depth of history . . . and of what you take seriously without reservation in your moral and political activities.

If a lot of that is not "semantically superfluous" I do not know what is. But in Tillich's "depth," Robinson seems satisfied to have found a "category of existence." He makes it as clear as he can that it is not just another "spatial metaphor": this is not just a God "down under" as a change from "up there." Depth is spiritual withinness and, speaking of God in "depth," Tillich is "not speaking of another being *at all*"; God is *in* us and *in* history.

> *"He who knows about depth knows about God."* "I remember," says Robinson, "at the time how these words [of Tillich] lit up for me."

And he not only draws comfort and metaphysical assurance from the substitution of "depth" for (say) "height," he feels, not unusually, that "depth" psychology will help us all to see and accept what he implies:

> . . . there is no doubt that this simple substitution can make much religious language suddenly appear more relevant. For we are familiar today with depth psychology and with the idea that ultimate truth is deep or profound.

It is strange that Robinson has not heard or found out for himself that a lot of Freudian or other "depth" psychology can look like a topographical myth.

And then, in our "moral and political activities," what *do* "we" take with "total seriousness"? Surely both the Nazis and members of the Kremlin have been very earnest, utterly committed men?

Reading of "ultimate reality" and "the ground of our being" I am reminded of F. H. Bradley's partisan but legitimate stricture on Matthew Arnold. With a similar "semantic superfluousness" to Robinson's or Tillich's and not less emotively, Arnold equated God with "The Eternal that makes for Righteousness." Bradley didn't care for this. I cannot see why we should like "ultimate reality" any better

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We might think that if, as we all agree, "God" is not "out there" or "up there" or even "there" in any existential sense—is not "transcendent," that is, in the ordinary theistic sense—some of us could compromise on the notion of "immanence" —God is equally if mysteriously distributed throughout the universe. But Robinson and his fellows will not compromise, even on immanence. He concludes:

> Statements about God are acknowledgments of the transcendent unconditional element in all our relationships, and supremely in our relationships with other persons . . . in Tillich's words . . . "To call God transcendent . . . [means] . . . that within itself, the finite world points beyond itself . . . it is self-transcendent."

The next step is comparatively simple. If this is where we find God—in our human capacity to live beyond ourselves for others—then God is personal, and God is Love.

This is the commonest "solution" —and it is favored, among others, by Mrs. Haughton. It is based upon taking, or mistaking, a logical, for a concrete, universal. "*God is both in nature and more than nature*" because he is (e.g.) "Love." For "Love" (e.g.) is that which is characteristically human but also transcendent, because it cannot be predicated or predicted of any particular human individual. It would be just as impressive, surely, to say that God is Beauty, Truth, or Goodness—or any other abstract category. Bradley, in the same context as before, is relevant again and must be quoted in the name of all simple believers: "*We want something we can worship.*" It must be added that neither Robinson nor any of the others will accept that "Love is God" would do just as well.

The new "honest" theologians have a marked psychological advantage. Not only do they compel our admiration by their willingness to face all objections except the most obvious and unanswerable. They can also draw on the fund of respect all nice people have for the religious feelings and convictions of others—and we all, of course, as beings, are suffering from the "Death of God." Moreover, this genuine sympathy is heavily backed by social conformism—decent people aren't rude about religion, in the mess, or at dinner-parties, or even on TV.

Hence one feels driven not only to the conventional gesture of taking off one's hat before entering the forum, but also to a guilty suspicion that, in entering at all, one is eristic and logomachous. Indeed, who is totally disinterested? We mostly prefer to be right.

Nevertheless, there are reasons wider than either rationalism or theism for reviewing, from time to time, the logical activities of the most "Honest-to-God" theologians. More than most, this is the age of rhetoric and suasion. Even the myriad "experts," even the scientific experts, have to sell themselves, not so much because they will be doubted, as because there are so many different and competing performances. My old-fashioned, austere, and literal conscience about the "noumenal" and the "sacred" has just been shocked as a result of reading a headline in the London *Times*—"Church must give youth the hard sell"—that means give them logic not faith.

We have to work hard to keep alive the spirit and the sense of criticism against the easier deceptions and self-deceptions. All of us, not only poets, have to learn to purify the language of the tribe—and to watch its logic. If the only "reason" the honest theologians have left us for religious faith is that it is absurd, they should be warned that there are many competing absurdities which will find easier favor.

Updike's Couples

John Thompson

THAT MOST DELICATE monster Humbert Humbert suffered, as we know, extravaganzas of the nerves and was concerned to record these seizures in commensurate images. "And then, without the least warning," he tells us, "a blue sea-wave swelled under my heart. . . ." As well it might have done. The occasion was Humbert's first sight of his Lolita; a deluge would not have been too much. And furthermore, Lolita is discovered in the act of sunbathing, and she is the reincarnation of Humbert's lost Riviera nymphet of his boyhood "princedom by the sea." Moving toward her, he finds that "my knees were like reflections of knees in rippling water, and my lips were like sand . . .". A seascape honestly come by; and besides, who if not this monster could claim his own bewildered interior was nothing less than *that Ocean where each kind Does streight his own resemblance find?* A blue sea-wave is not too strange a presence for us to accept there. Nor can it seem unlikely that Humbert himself, as we know him, would see himself first and last in such processions of imagery.

Images like these haunt also the persons in John Updike's new novel, *Couples.** Their anatomies, like poor Humbert Humbert's, are subject to alarming visitations and transformations. A heart, racing, "seemed to bulge like a knapsack as into it was abruptly stuffed two thoughts . . .". "Confession to the contrary ballooned against the roof of her mouth." "Beneath the red blanket of her closed eyelids . . .". "Piet opened his mouth to tell her, but the ice chilling his secret held." "Adultery lit her from within, like the ashen mantle of a lamp, or as if an entire house of gauzy hangings and partitions were ignited but refused to be consumed and, rather, billowed and glowed, its structure incandescent." "'I love you' was pulled from him like a tooth." "Her heart, blind lamb, beat faster."

The world these people move in is likewise possessed by spirits. "A spring midnight pressed on the cold windows," we are told as the book opens, and at the end of this scene, we are told again, in detail: "Beyond her hunched shoulders, an extensiveness pressed tight against the bubbled old panes and the frail mullions, a blackness charged with the ache of first growth and the suspended skeletons of Virgo and Leo and Gemini." Not only in their dreams, which we are often privi-

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leged to review, but in their waking hours as well they are made to witness an occultness in things. Fireplace hearths are "like entryways into a sooty upward core of time." "The V-mail spurting through the thrilled slot." "Whiskey hurried to replace the calories fresh air had burned from their bodies." When not charged thus with anima, things have often a tendency to lapse or to rise into something else; the world has everywhere the instability of potential metamorphosis. "Sunshine broken into code by puffs and schooners of cumulus." "The often-patched boardwalk, its slats of varied wood like the keys of a gigantic piano . . ." Even the most casual and momentary object can be abruptly wrenched into another thing. "A chewed sponge ball, a little pitted moon . . ."

The involvements of these persons with one another are involvements also with images. "Foxy felt the power of tears; behind the silver shield of them she advanced against her mother . . ." "Freddy went on, swimming, trying not to drown in their contempt, his black mouth lifted . . . A contemptuous silence welled from the men." "Piet, who lived now day and night behind glassy walls of fear . . ." "Only Bea's presence, a circle like the mouth of a white bell of which her overheard voice was the chiming clapper, promised repose. He remembered her as a calm pool in which he could kneel to the depth of his navel." (I hope some scholar of the future, in the annotated edition of this well-raisined fruitcake, will note the pregnant allusion here to the folk poem, "Ding dong bell, pussy's in the well," and I hope too that he will expound at length the complex, inverted sexual punning, both verbal and visual, of this remarkably synechdochic passage.)

Sometimes the objects of the world, and what they can be made to stand for, and the histories of these persons, become involved in linked images of metaphysical persistence, yoked together, if not with violence then with something surprisingly sticky. (In fairness, I should say that not often do we have such rapid transmogrifications as those which made a bell into a pool in the two successive sentences quoted above.) The following passage is in exposition of the marriage of one of the couples, who met as a poor young man and a rich young lady. Let me ask, why are the clocks themselves, the young lady's father's clocks, thus given the active office of encouragement? "In the house there had been many clocks, grandfather's and ship's clocks, clocks finished in ormolu or black lacquer, fine-spun clocks in silver cases, with four balls as pendulum. Their courtship passed as something instantly forgotten, like an enchantment, or a mistake. Time came unstuck. All the clocks hurried their ticking, hurried them past doubts, around sharp corners and knobbed walnut newels." The expensive clocks represent the ease of monied circumstances? Is this only a flourish, perhaps slightly too graceful, or is this meant to be one of many distortions of surface that suggest something beneath, beyond, or within the surface? Surely the answer is that these embellishments are not merely idle decoration, and yet, as a discussion of the story itself may show, and certain other elements of its style, if *Couples* has in its complicated set of designs a master pattern it is no clear and simple one—or, to be obscure for the moment myself, it is a bafflingly clear and simple pattern.

Even—as it does not in the case of feverish Humbert, scribbling away at his dreadful confession in his condemned cell, having contracted fatal cases equally of the English language, of America, and of love, delirious with words and sights and remembered touches—as it cannot for Humbert and for Humbert's Nabokov, the question arises of what all this language is doing here. Whose is it? There is no Humbert Humbert here pridefully to say, "You can always count on a murderer for a fancy prose style." Perhaps, but not necessarily, you can count on a fancy prose style for very large intentions, too, that go beyond its own rhetorical ambitions.

COUPLES is about a circle of young married people in a small commuter's town called Tarbox, just south of Boston. Its story is not so easy to recite, for several reasons. The first, and maybe the least, is that like most skillful modern novelists, and John Updike is really very skillful at these things, the author gives us the story in a series of scenes, and memories in exposition within these scenes, and passages of exposition like that above about the clocks, and in dialogue (pages and pages of dialogue!), and in the sudden time-shifts so beloved by Conrad and James and Ford, and again in dialogue; in bird's-eye views of the town and all as seen from the church steeple with its great colonial gilded weathercock: from the cock's eye, a copper English penny. Through this density of material the author guides us most skillfully, in and out of houses and in and out of minds, into the past and present and even into the future, some of which lies in our own minds. This last is because the story has as one of its designs the fact that the year is 1963. One of the guardian demons often invoked is the figure of President John F. Kennedy, and one of the scenes we wait for is that of November 22, 1963.

Another difficulty in telling the story briefly is that this constellation of young couples is continually swinging in and out of a number of orbits in a complicated system of gravities, and to recite the shifts of their couplings straightforwardly would be much more bewildering than these things are as the story unfolds in the book. But most of the difficulty lies in the meaning. We cannot tell a story well unless we know what it means. We cannot tell another's story, that is; the author tells his own story as he must, and the meaning lies within it, within all those shifts and means and manners of his telling. He need not, even if he could, be explicit. But summary must try to be clear and thus has to be tendentious.

A new young couple comes to Tarbox. He is a biochemist, they buy an old beach house to remodel, she is pregnant. They are caught up in a social circle of people slightly older than themselves, a Boston broker and his wife, a Boston banker and his wife, a Korean physicist (and wife – they are couples, all have wives of course), a Jewish technician, an airline pilot, the local dentist, a local contractor, and one man so rich he doesn't do much of anything but go to Boston for lunch. Most of them have chil-

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dren, mostly in school. They play tennis, golf, touch football, basketball, they swim and drink a lot and dance. "The men had stopped having careers and the women had stopped having babies. Liquor and love were left." The dentist is sinister, the dust jacket and the scene on the night of Kennedy's assassination tell us he is a kind of priest, and of him it is said, "He thinks we're a circle. A magic circle of heads to keep the night out. He told me he gets frightened if he doesn't see us over a weekend. He thinks we've made a church of each other."

The communion of the church is adultery. The contractor, Piet Hanema, a second-generation Dutchman raised in the harsh Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, loves his wife but she is cold, and he has had or is having affairs with several of the wives in the circle. He begins one with Foxy, the pregnant newcomer whose husband is a cold fish. One pair of couples, and then another, takes up wife-swapping. Piet's wife, the most innocent of all the women, has to acquiesce to a blackmailed night with the sinister dentist. Piet's and Foxy's affair is discovered, after they no longer really care. He loses his lovely wife, and in the end marries Foxy. By this time, death, boredom, and other horrors have broken up the circle of couples. The church with the penny-eyed cock on its steeple, God to the children of Tarbox—"That is, if God were physically present in Tarbox, it was in the form of this unreachable weathercock visible from everywhere"—the church is struck by lightning and burns down. Piet and Foxy move away out of sight and memory.

IT IS A strange story. It is strange, so it seems to me, not because its moral is, if I am correct in my telling, so bald and so fierce: sexuality is the worship of Satan. The famous modern style of the Kennedy era was the worship of Satan, and brings only death and disorder. No, who would refuse really to listen to this sermon? The old good joinery of the old carpenters is replaced everywhere, to honest Piet's despair, with the corner-cutting of cheap-jack housing developments; the new morality means the death of the family, and children are afraid. Piet lies awake at night, remembering his adulteries and fearing death. His daughter fears death and he cannot comfort her and he loses her. His church is struck by lightning. His child in Foxy is aborted. Who since Anna Karenina has heard so clearly the voice of the Lord saying, "Vengeance is mine"? No doubt things are bad, corruption stalks the land, and we are being punished. About that church I don't know; it sounds so preposterous I wish I could leave it out of my summary of the plot, but it says so right in the book: "The Congregational Church was burning. God's own lightning had struck it." And you thought God was not watching all the time? Indeed He was, just as Piet feared when he lay with Georgene out under the open sky on her sun porch, right where God could see them. John Updike has given God back again His dread weapons and has restored His warning that if we do not keep our knickers up the wrath of His lightning will find us. And still, absurd as this is, I do not think we should object too rapidly or too complacently about such a sermon, if it were straightforward.

Only, there is a trick here. It lies concealed, I believe, in the manner of the telling and then in something tricky about the sexuality. Each least person in this book is endowed with the sensibility and with the figurative powers of the author, that skillful modern author so adept with those images of the senses. Seduced by this sign of the modern, as we are seduced by—and this aspect of the book I have altogether slighted—the sharp observation, the knowledge, the social and historical knowingness of the author, we are as it were subliminally brought to a vision of disgust with this entire scene. Doubtless we ought to be brought to this, and perhaps it is fair to do it by any means. Yet despite all its brutality, its transitoriness, its illusions and follies, despite perhaps its profound involvement in all our troubles, despite even all the naive windiness of the modern doctrine of the polymorphous perverse, I feel a certain loyalty to Eros and do not like to see him done dirt.

Unless I am mistaken, Eros is here done most grievous dirt. Those metaphors, those animations, that murderous fancy language which imbues with its luridness the people and the things of this book, this fancy work also imbues luridly the sexual activity, and as I have said there is a world of it in *Couples*. It is clever of Updike to have carried to this extremity the anti-sexual pornography of his other books. As lyrical as any outburst from Humbert Humbert, in passage after passage the variations of the human sexual act are floridly described. And the emotions, too; the ecstatic rhetoric of the "good orgasm" is presented over and over. The sexual organs, the "pudenda" (L., neuter gerundive of *pudere*, to cause shame, ashame, lit. "that of which we ought to be ashamed" . . .), those little parts of us which Freud believed had not undergone, for some reason, the ennobling evolution that has given us all such lovely faces, these poor private contraptions of nature are exposed to all the poetry at the command of the author, as his characters get right down after them in all moods and manners. These parts are granted here, as well as many fancy paraphrastic phrases, their homely little common names that didn't used to get much currency even in novels, and still are not quite welcome in the chaste pages of many magazines. Here, of course, Updike is only exercising his novelist's right to record the manners of the time, and I take it he is correct in reporting that we converse now in tender intimacy as well as in public with language that used to be reserved for abuse or for male jocularity. I presume also that he is correct in reporting that there is now, among the educated middle classes, an energetic employment of the variant forms of human intercourse as recommended for some years by marriage manuals, including the extensive enjoyment of oral-genital activities. But in this novel the exercise of the recent freedoms of language is not in the service of celebration of its subject, as it always was before.

Though they are accompanied often with protestations of affection, these activities in *Couples* are vain, futile, and unattractive. I suppose it is a triumph of the author to make them seem so;

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preachers and pornographers have labored for years on the subject of human sexuality without making it boring. Perhaps it is a triumph of the times rather than an individual triumph, or perhaps of both, one of those victories scarcely to be foreseen when a courageous man suddenly discovers what the forces of his time have all at once made possible. It is akin, really, to the new or revived general freedom of expression, in which the mimicry of sexual activity in dancing, in painting, and in sculpture, enables the beholder of these scenes to recognize, in the unashamed pleasure—the unabashed mimicry of pleasure—all the dreadful deadness of such mimicry.

Perhaps it was inevitable that someone would come along who could, with this power and accuracy, while seeming to strike with a sword at the roots of life, lift only a lecturer's wand at a corpse on the table. Often enough it has been tried, in the preacher's voice, but now the prophet has assumed the accents and the fancy style of the artist, he who always thought he had somehow to be on the side of Satan, if this poor business of ours really were Satanic. But who could have supposed that what we took to be the celebration of freedom would turn out to be the celebration of death? Our very method of bringing life to the world is not only wicked, not only capable of deviation into perversities like those of Humbert Humbert, but far worse than that, it is ugly and foolish and boring. What could bring a man to say it? How could he request such baleful tortures for us? But such, poor Foxy, poor Piet, such is the power to urge evil, as Lucretius told us, *Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum*, such is the baleful power of religion.

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The Teacher-Scholar

THE DISSENTING ACADEMY. Edited by THEODORE ROSZAK. *Pantheon. 304 pp. $6.95.*

Reviewed by GEORGE KATEB

AT ANY TIME, it is not easy to talk about the life of scholarship without sounding starchy. It becomes even harder when one is faced by this collection of essays, some of which are, to put it gently, rather raucous. Clamor, recklessness, an assault on the niceties, a relentless accusatory tone are all here. Angered and demoralized by the war in Vietnam, eleven scholars in the humanities and the social sciences have turned on their own community, the academy, and challenged it to deny its share of guilt for that war. Nor would a confession of guilt appease these critics: they want penance and reformation as well. They demand that their colleagues move their energies away from conventional interests and take on other tasks, the tasks fit for serious learned men who live in a desperate world. In irritated response, one may be led—hating oneself all the way—to an affirmation of pious sentiments, to the easy rhetoric heard on commencement day and found in foundation reports. The bad manners of some of the contributors are really so unsubtle that their colleagues, otherwise sympathetic and all too ready to accept chastisement from any quarter, may rebel. Unlovely harshness will be tolerated in genius, but these are one's colleagues, after all, who thunder; not Sartre, Heidegger, or Russell.

It would be a pity, however, to let irritation carry the day. This book does, at the least, taunt the reader into trying to put together a few remarks about the life of scholarship, despite the risks of pomposity involved. The question that must be asked is, What does the teacher-scholar stand for? What are the values which he tries to promote and strengthen simply by being what he is and doing what he is supposed to do? The first and most obvious thing to say is that his *profession* is the truth. Where others get on with only as much truth as they need, and permit a thousand expediencies or delicacies or kinds of laziness to set limits on truth-telling, the teacher-scholar must be ruthless. Scientific truth is no longer subversive, though one day it may become so again, because of human fear or political apprehension. But the truth about man in society must always be, to some degree or other, subversive: the humanities and the social sciences constantly erode human certainty and self-confidence, social stability, political and religious purposes, common conceptions concerning the ends of life. The natural habitat of everybody is the cave; sleep, lethargy, and conformity the normal conditions of order. Against these facts, the teacher-scholar sets himself, he labors on the side of disruption, discomfort, and alienation. He is the servant of the great and the lesser poets, novelists, philosophers, and political and social theorists; or, in rare instances, he is himself one of their number. Whether he creates, synthesizes, or transmits, he is of the Devil's party, working for light and for movement against all rest and certainty, all acceptance and assent. The truth-teller is the nay-sayer, even though his negations may become petrified into dogmas or ideologies that others use to cloud the light and arrest movement. He is a rebel, traitor, and atheist; partly because he loves to be, because he is a spiteful misfit, but also because he actually does loathe darkness, the warmth and regulated madness of the cave.

From the commitment to truth, certain other qualities come to be intimately associated with the teacher-scholar. He is ideally an idler, someone who is both bloodless and spectatorial. If he speaks or sings like the Devil, he watches and notices, always from a distance, like an angel. He sublimates his hatred of life into the spirit of a dry disinterestedness. He keeps alive the very idea of impartiality; he tries to get the whole view of any matter. His better self rarely takes sides, so that he can respond to the appeal—sometimes loud, sometimes unexpressed—that is found in all human exertion and aspiration. If he does not hear, who will? If he does not empty himself, how can he listen?

He is also a player, but his arena is not life but language. He wants the truth, but knows that on anything important he will fail to seize all of it. His consolation comes from the intellectual pattern he fabricates. He may achieve a system, or he may merely produce a scattering of arguments, metaphors, and disclosures. But whatever he does, he knows that he studies or builds sandcastles. His love of the truth is checked by his limitations, but he disguises those limitations in style.

He is also a trifler. Which is to say that his work helps to preserve the fragile ensemble called civilization, an ensemble made up of all the inessential activities which alone are truly human because they are done for their own sake and because they have nothing to do with efficiency or scarcity. He symbolizes the unnatural, only more intensely than the worlds of fashion, entertainment, sports, and ritual do. He affirms the separation of humankind from all other creatures. From a strict point of view, he is wasteful, marginal, accepting no criterion of seriousness but that which seems frivolous to the world. He is a pedant and a casuist. He worries about the past, and has the effrontery to think that the present generation of men is not the first to walk the earth and will not be the last; and that its immediate concerns are not the only conceivable concerns.

Lucky the time and place that can afford such a pervert. The eleven academic dissenters say that

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GEORGE KATEB, *who teaches political science at Amherst, is author of the forthcoming* Political Theory: Its Nature and Uses. *Mr. Kateb's widely-discussed article, "George F. Kennan: The Heart of a Diplomat," appeared in our January issue.*

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we do not now live in such a time and place. They all share the feeling that the duties of citizenship are paramount. How then is citizenship supposed to govern the work of the teacher-scholar? There are three main answers given, insisted on, in *The Dissenting Academy*. The first answer is that the teacher-scholar must refuse to place himself at the service of the *status quo*. In his classroom as well as in his writing, he should shed his timidity, and resist the gratifications of sense and ego that a rich society so effortlessly puts before him. Thus relieved of both fear and gratitude, he can forebear from offering his knowledge to agencies in society which use his knowledge to act in stupid, selfish, or malevolent ways; and deny his auspices to those agencies when they seek to rationalize their policies. In short, he should not cooperate, in his professional capacity, with public wrong-doing, whether wrong-doing takes the form of preserving injustices or perpetrating new ones. This first answer dominates the essays by three political scientists: Christian Bay, Robert Engler, and Marshall Windmiller; and by the distinguished linguist, Noam Chomsky. Chomsky, especially, is severe in his indictment of those academic intellectuals who supplied ideas and apologies for the horrors of successive administrations in Vietnam. On the other hand, the three political scientists rebuke their brethren for celebrating the American political way of life, even though it sanctions gross inequalities and neglects the legitimate interests of countless, largely voiceless people.

THE SECOND ANSWER is that the teacher-scholar should devote himself to thinking about the personal and social needs of men in contemporary society. His teaching and research should be engaged by the urgencies that surround him: he should come down from the ivory tower and take a part in the enormous work of social reform. He should judge all that he does by its utilitarian efficacy. If the first answer contains an idea as to what citizenship forbids, the second answer indicates its positive, active intellectual duties. This theme is sounded particularly by two historians, Theodore Roszak and Staughton Lynd; and by Louis Kampf, a professor of literature, and Sumner Rosen, an economist. Roszak addresses all teacher-scholars, while the other three speak first of all to colleagues in their disciplines.

The third answer is that the teacher-scholar must be a citizen not only in his professional work; he must also act as a citizen in the real world. He must lead the young in their harassment of the established; he must succor the disadvantaged. What is more, when it comes time to pass judgment on the academic qualities of junior teacher-scholars, those in authority must take into account this extra-academic or quasi-academic performance. Roszak praises the young instructor who organizes a "well-conceived campaign against capital punishment"; or "feeling that the politics of his community has gone slack, undertakes to run for Congress"; or "leads a civil-disobedience exercise against a germ-warfare laboratory"; or "devotes a large amount of his time to organizing 'freedom schools' for underprivileged kids"; or organizes a teach-in on the Vietnam war. "Perhaps he even travels to Vietnam for the Inter-University Committee and then writes on the effect the war is having on village life and on American moral character for the *Atlantic* or the *New Republic*."

Of the three answers, the first is clearly compatible with the notion of the teacher-scholar I have sketched. Actually, it is a more pointedly political version, a politically narrowed version of such a notion. Yes, of course, it is wrong to cooperate with wrong-doing. I would want to go further and say that the chances are always high that those in power are up to no or little good, or alternatively they have a vested interest in confusion and falsehood, for all the cares they must support. The sharpest and oldest class-warfare is between thinkers and authority. (See the comments made a short time back by Novotny of Czechoslovakia.) It is not just the Vietnam war that makes that point. However, let us agree that the war is the most recent vivid illustration

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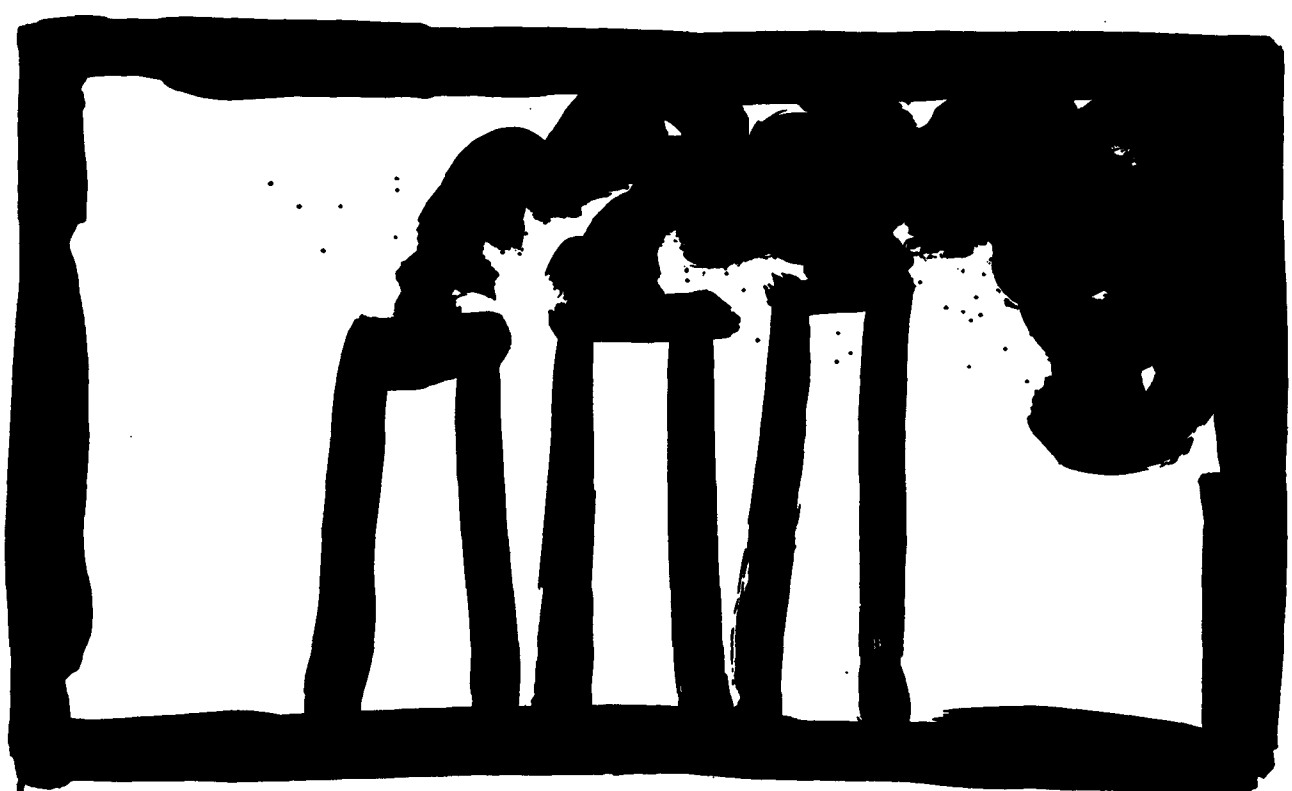

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of the point: shame on those who, from Kennedy's day to the present, have been authority's accomplices and spokesmen. They should have known better; they should have acted on the general principle: shun involvement in government (except when there is a dire and palpable emergency). Add a subsidiary principle: do not accept favors from government. Only let us notice that it would be foolish to make too much of the influence of teacher-scholars on government. Men in power have their own interests; they do not need professors to tell them what those interests are. We would have had the war in Vietnam, and all the other bad things (as well as the good ones), even if not a single teacher-scholar worked in Washington.

The second answer raises more problems. Staughton Lynd is most eloquent, almost ingenious, in asserting the primacy of the present in the scholarly burdens of the professor (as historian). It may be true that some of the best history of a period is written by someone alive in it, and that therefore some of the best history historians can now write will be contemporary history, the history of events in which they may even play a part. Still, the standard must remain the historian's standard—the quality of historical writing, not the help the historian gives to the solution of practical political and social problems. Otherwise the historian becomes a propagandist; and propaganda is propaganda, though the historian's cause is the best in the world. There is no use in denying that just as there is perpetual strife between thinkers and authority, so there is perpetual strife between thinkers and the most humane citizenship. Citizenship means action; action means partiality and some degree of fanaticism. How can a commitment to truth survive very much active citizenship? How can truth survive the requirements of utilitarian efficacy? Is there not a good deal of innocence in supposing that there is no conflict here? It is no accident that the best essay in the book is Chomsky's "The Responsibility of Intellectuals." Chomsky sets out to tell the truth about the record of justification for our policies in Vietnam. Certainly there is moral passion in Chomsky's writing; with equal certainty, it helps to arouse moral passion in others. But to the judicious reader, the piece is successful because Chomsky honors the conventional standards of the historian, not because the reader may happen to sympathize with Chomsky's feelings. What is more, Chomsky has done more good by writing it than he has by any gesture of active citizenship, wonderfully courageous though his gestures have been.

AND IF ALL historians and other scholars followed the lead of Lynd (and others in this collection) and concentrated on the present, and excluded any consideration but that of immediate relevance, who then would preserve knowledge of the past? Has the past, in its achievements and agonies, no claim on us? To say it again, we are not the first generation of men to walk the earth. Is not memory intrinsic to the barest conception of humanity? I speak not just of history as a source of enlightenment for the present, though that is something tremendous. I speak also of history for the sake of the dead, the ancestors whom we live off, for both good and ill. Lynd's position cannot be universalized without a lapse into barbarism. Let him and like-minded scholars stay in the present; but also let others continue the effort of communication with what has gone before.

As for the third answer, there is a terrible inappropriateness in wanting young teacher-scholars to be judged as teacher-scholars for what they do as citizens. Roszak's view is entirely too close to Mao's doctrine of "red first, expert second." Doing is not the same as thinking; doing good is not the same as teaching and writing well. Virtue is not a substitute for scholarship: each has its place. But for the teacher-scholar, if he is to be a teacher-scholar, everything in life must be sacrificed to the impossibly difficult asceticism of training his intelligence. In the nature of things, he cannot have much time left over from his intellectual work for organizing, leading, and demonstrating. No matter how exhilarated he feels after a confrontation with the forces of wrong-doing, he

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must admit that what he has done is commendable by every criterion except the one he has chosen to live by. He cannot be very busy and still discipline himself for truth-telling, still do all the violence he must do to himself to become different from other men.

It may be, however, that all I have said is beside the point. Our crisis may be so grave as to necessitate a total mobilization of virtue, a total absorption in citizenship. The old-fashioned definition of the teacher-scholar may be superannuated. I ask only that the cost of the crisis be honestly calculated. If we can no longer endure the existence of the academic mind, let us at least know what it is we are condemning to extinction. Let us not usher in a new age of darkness and call it liberation.

Catholicism Today

A TIME TO BUILD. By MICHAEL NOVAK. *Macmillan. 493 pp. $8.95.*

Reviewed by J. COERT RYLAARSDAM

MICHAEL NOVAK is a Roman Catholic, a layman, and a theologian. In America that combination has till now been rare enough to claim attention. What is more important about this edited collection of essays on many subjects, however, is that it gives us an inclusive picture of the range and direction of the change taking place in the thinking of Roman theologians. The author is a scholar who has assimilated the insights and implications of current Protestant theology, notably as expressed by Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich. He has taken a good look at the anachronism of the forms of Christianity—intellectual, institutional, and ethical—in the modern world. A disciple of Bernard Lonergan, he has begun to put his learning and fresh understanding to critical and constructive use in his own scene and for his own purposes.

Mr. Novak is undaunted by the crumbling of the intellectual and cultural structures of Christendom —for which he uses the circumlocution "Judaeo-Christian tradition." He greets with relief the waning of the proud institutional spirit of *Romanita,* which trusted in their perpetual adequacy. Nevertheless, he has not become a Protestant; that is, he has not changed his inherited views about the role of structures for faith. Even his title suggests that; this is the time to build—new structures: intellectual, institutional, and ethical. Standing amid the ruins, he does not fault their ancient architects for any basic error in vision, conception, or design. Rather, he is impressed by the ravages of time, which wastes all human works. His Protestant tutors and sources may have helped Novak see more clearly or quickly that all religious structures, whether of thought, administration, or conduct, are, indeed, also always man's work. But the logic of that discovery does not lead him to question the function of the work of man in the context of his apprehension of the work of God; it simply teaches him to expect periodic decay and to be prepared to build anew.

Virtually all Christians call themselves "catholic." All say that the whole world, in all its parts, is relevant to their faith, and that their faith, in turn, is of relevance to the whole world. Thus all agree that there is a Christian way as well as a human way of talking about man's responsiblity for it; and all seek the reconciliation of the two. But there is a characteristically Protestant style for this catholicity, and an equally characteristically Roman one. The two are in constant tension, and each needs the contrast of the other to make its own point. For centuries now, institutional division has tended to push them to opposite ends of a continuous line. The Protestant catholic makes much of God's initiative and freedom; the Roman catholic presupposes these but concentrates on the availability of his action to man's understanding and communication. The Roman stresses God's constancy and faithfulness; the Protestant remembers His mystery and unpredictability. As Novak says about Bonhoeffer, the

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Protestant "attempts to speak 'from God's viewpoint,'" directly; the Roman strives for, and with, a human perspective that incorporates this viewpoint. In all of these essays, Novak exhibits the Roman style, with great sensitivity and with all sorts of qualifications designed to narrow the distance between the two foci of the tension. But the tension remains, as it would even if the institutional breach disappeared, for it is inherent to all biblical faith, Jewish and Christian alike.

UNDAUNTED AS he is, the author is aware of the bleak prospects for the Church. Humanly speaking, it has "reached the end of the line," he says. Its motions have become stiff with age, so that its communication with today's secular culture is inarticulate and superficial. He has even pondered the possibility that the Christian faith itself may be on the way out, along with its anachronistic embodiments. "Christianity Renewed or Slowly Abandoned?" he asks. Nevertheless, Novak faces the future hopefully, relying on the biblical theme that things unseen are finally more powerful than those seen. He banks on a new era in Christian history in which faith will once more provide men with a cogent and compelling definition of their world and in which the processes and structures of nature and culture will again serve the faithful as exemplifications of their faith.

What grounds does Novak have for this optimism? In the nature of the case, at the deepest level his "reasons" are spoken "from faith to faith" and cannot be assessed from without. For example, he says, " . . . in the darkness it is the Lord who builds"; and, "God lives yet in the understanding and knowing of his people among whom the Word of God is spoken." But however sincere and decisive this language of faith may be, the man of faith who speaks it also feels the need for more objective reasons. In order to rationalize his hope that the capacities for rebirth in Christianity are still equal to its current needs, Professor Novak offers at least three considerations. First, Christianity has changed before. Secondly, as a revelation of God, the *historical* Jesus Christ—as distinct from the cosmic Christ of faith—is incomparable. Finally, "nontheists in our society have appropriated so many Jewish and Christian values." This reviewer finds a fourth reason, not given in the book, more persuasive than any of these; namely, the rise within the Church of men of faith and learning, of whom the author is only one, who are able and ready to deal trenchantly and critically with the situation, men who not only know that this is a time to build but consider it most important to do so.

WHAT SHALL we say about Novak's reasons? First, Novak is right: Christianity has changed before, more than once, and not just in the way of progressive development. There have been changes that constituted the sort of radical reconception which the author has in mind as the only and inescapable way by which Christian faith can come to terms with, and assimilate, the secular world into itself today. One could add that it was just this capacity for radical reconception that sent the faith on its way into the world, established it as the formative spiritual center of Western civilization, and enabled it to retain its initiative into the beginning of the modern period.

The first radical reconception of Christianity occurred at the very beginning, as the faith still lay in its Jewish matrix. The New Testament reflects the change. Arthur Cohen has observed that the amazing thing about Christianity is not that it began, but that when it discovered it had been wrong it was capable of beginning again. The change was radical. The apocalyptic announcement that the old world had lost all worth and meaning and that a new one would take its place began to make way for a progressive accommodation with the old and a revaluation of it. The Hebraic theme of the one God, Creator of heaven and earth, was salvaged, at least in principle. The temporal and cosmological perspective of apocalypticism was demythologized, and the faith began its long process of assimilating the Greek heritage, using neo-Platonic categories and biblical symbols.

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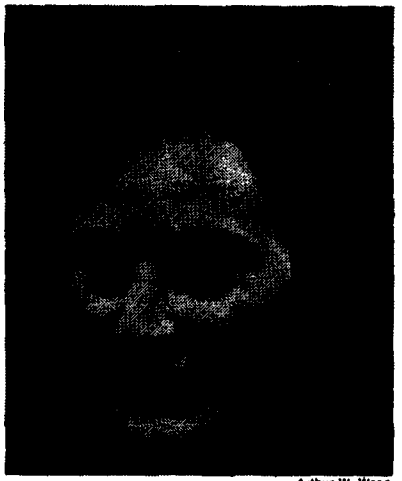

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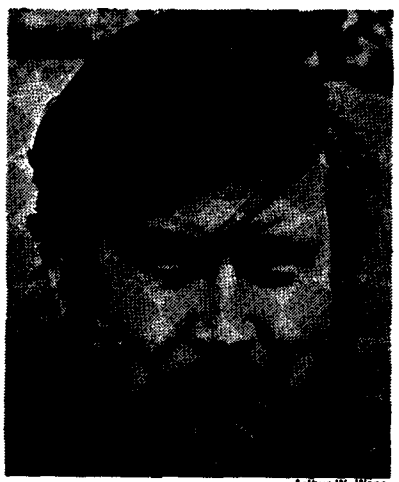

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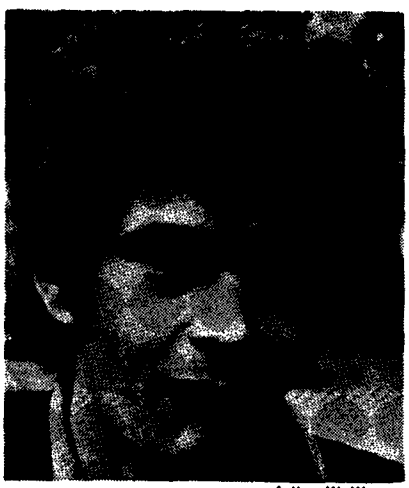

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With Constantine, the Church extended this return to the old world. The reconception was radical, though mainly political and institutional. But the imperial theocracy of the Church impressed itself so deeply upon the Christian vision of self-understanding that Mr. Novak describes Roman renewal in our day as a liberation from it.

IN THE Western Church, the intellectual reconception of the faith by Aquinas raised still higher the valuation placed upon the old world of time, space, and matter. This radical 13th-century restatement of the faith either launched the Renaissance or made it possible for the Church to contain and nurture it, perhaps both. In profound ways, it set the stage for the modern world. Taking his cue from Bernard Lonergan, Novak begins his own rebuilding for today by restating the Aristotelian categories in modern terms.

There has, then, been more than one Christianity; the faith's capacity for radical renewal and the integration of new cultural movements in the past make an impressive record. Does it still possess the same creative vitality? As the author well knows, the record cannot answer that; it can only illustrate his hope. A lot has happened. The Reformation did not really issue in a reconception of the faith that reintegrated Christianity and culture, at least not in Novak's way. If that was its intent, the result was abortive and counts as a bad omen. And if it was not, its legacy of division would nevertheless seemed to have increased the hazards.

I find Novak's appeal to the *historical* Jesus Christ even more problematical. In no way has modern secularity triumphed more completely than in establishing the contingency of every thing and every one in time. This also holds for the New Testament and Jesus. Today, Christians disagree about Jesus. Some hold we can never rediscover what he really taught. Increasingly, more converge toward the conclusion which holds that he was a compelling prophetic preacher, a Jew who did not think of himself as the Messiah and who may not even have shared the apocalypticism of some Jewish sects in his time. Christian scholars who propound this view say that the messianic and apocalyptic features rest on the interpretation the followers of Jesus gave to his death: that is, on "the experience of the resurrection." The old antithesis of the "Jesus of history" and the "Christ of faith" seems to stand on firmer foundations than ever.

If the Christian faith in its quest for reconception were to make the historical Jesus the focus of its concern, it would probably have to engage in a more radical reassessment than it has ever attempted of the adequacy of its oldest interpretation of the meaning of the career of the man Jesus. An endeavor of this kind would seem to imply dealing *de novo* with the tenability and adequacy of such central dogmatic features as Christology, Eschatology, and Trinity. One feels in one's bones that it must and will come to this. But does the faith possess the vitality to pass through this inevitability creatively?

How about Novak's third reason for hope? He says non-theists have appropriated Christian values. What does that mean, and is it a help? Can one distinguish values in this way? In what sense is Christianity, or any other faith, a *source* of human values? That Christianity, in the long run, undertakes to protect and deepen human values is commendable; that it often speaks as if it had invented them seems arrogant. Nor does one get to the heart of the issue by saying that Christianity has always been "defective" in implementing its own best insights.

Novak is keenly aware that many of the values we prize most today had to contend with the fiercest opposition from Christianity before they could establish themselves. One thinks of the appreciation of the human person, with its implications for social freedom and religious liberty; and one thinks of the meaning of human sexuality, which Novak restates so admirably for the sake of the Church. Who is indebted to whom? He quotes with approval a statement in which Emil Fackenheim expresses his dismay and sorrow that Christianity or Judaism should ever have been "lukewarm . . . or downright hostile" to the liberal ideal. In some sense, at least, the Church has caught up with the humanists, not the humanists with the Church.

WELL THEN, is this a time to build? Can Christianity begin again? One is reminded of Ezekiel and the valley of dry bones: ". . . Can these bones live?" And the reply, "Thou knowest."

Novak's vision of the reconception of Christian faith in our era includes a prescription for a further shift toward secularity. That is in harmony with the whole story of redefinition and development, as already noted. One can applaud the author all the more because he also believes that the intellectual transformation should be American, that theologians today must build within the context of the empirical and realistic interpreters of American social and technological culture. He properly faults American Protestant theology's persistent addiction to the legacies of German idealism by recalling how Reinhold Niebuhr finally discovered that he had an ally rather than a foe in John Dewey.

His concentration on this-worldliness and on America makes it all the more regrettable that Novak does not show any awareness of the spirit and meaning of Judaism, either for what it is in itself or as a resource for his undertaking. He does, to be sure, speak with great admiration of the Jewish capacity for creative cultural achievement in the common life. But it does not seem to occur to him that this vitality is rooted in the spirit of Judaism, let alone that Jewish faith may have something crucially important to say to Christian faith as the latter sets out to redefine itself in the modern world. Novak seems to feel no need for dialogue.

The stages and ways by which Christianity has moved toward secularity have always involved a progressive reappropriation of many facets of the Jewish tradition, not only an assimilation of the Graeco-Roman legacy. But for dogmatic reasons this reclamation has almost always happened surreptitiously. By now, this procedure amounts to a fixed habit. One can only hope that the ever-growing indebtedness may begin to be acknowledged

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The Judaism Novak talks about is subsumed under Christianity. It is, to be sure, possible that there is something that can be called the Judaeo-Christian tradition. There is certainly a distinguishable Jewish component in Christianity; Hans Jonas has recently shown us something of its cultural role in Western history (COMMENTARY, November 1967). But in recognizing the Jewish component in Christianity one has not faced or listened to Judaism in its own right. Judaism's problems and ways of relating to the modern world are not identical with those of Christianity, as the author seems to assume.

Despite all Christian teaching, Israel still lives, *outside* of the Church as well as within it. In rebuilding, Christians should begin to absorb that fact, notably in America which, since the Holocaust, has become the new center of Jewish life in the Diaspora. Christianity teaches that it superseded Judaism; what it must learn is that it is renewed by it. For almost two millennia it has read the Old Testament in the light of the New; but in order to achieve and retain relevance in time, it has repeatedly had to re-interpret the New in the light of the Old. Once this state of affairs penetrates Christian consciousnes, the frustrated "dialogue" of Jews and Christians will become possible and important; and the radical transformation of Christianity, the need and course of which is so admirably set forth in this book, will have a brighter future.

After The Bomb

DEATH IN LIFE: SURVIVORS OF HIROSHIMA. By ROBERT JAY LIFTON. *Random House. 594 pp. $10.00.*

Reviewed by MARY ELLMANN

THE PREMISE of this book, that extraordinary historic events must have extraordinary psychic effects, seems at once plausible and

MARY ELLMANN, *a frequent contributor, reviewed Robert Coles's* Children of Crisis *in our November 1967 issue.*

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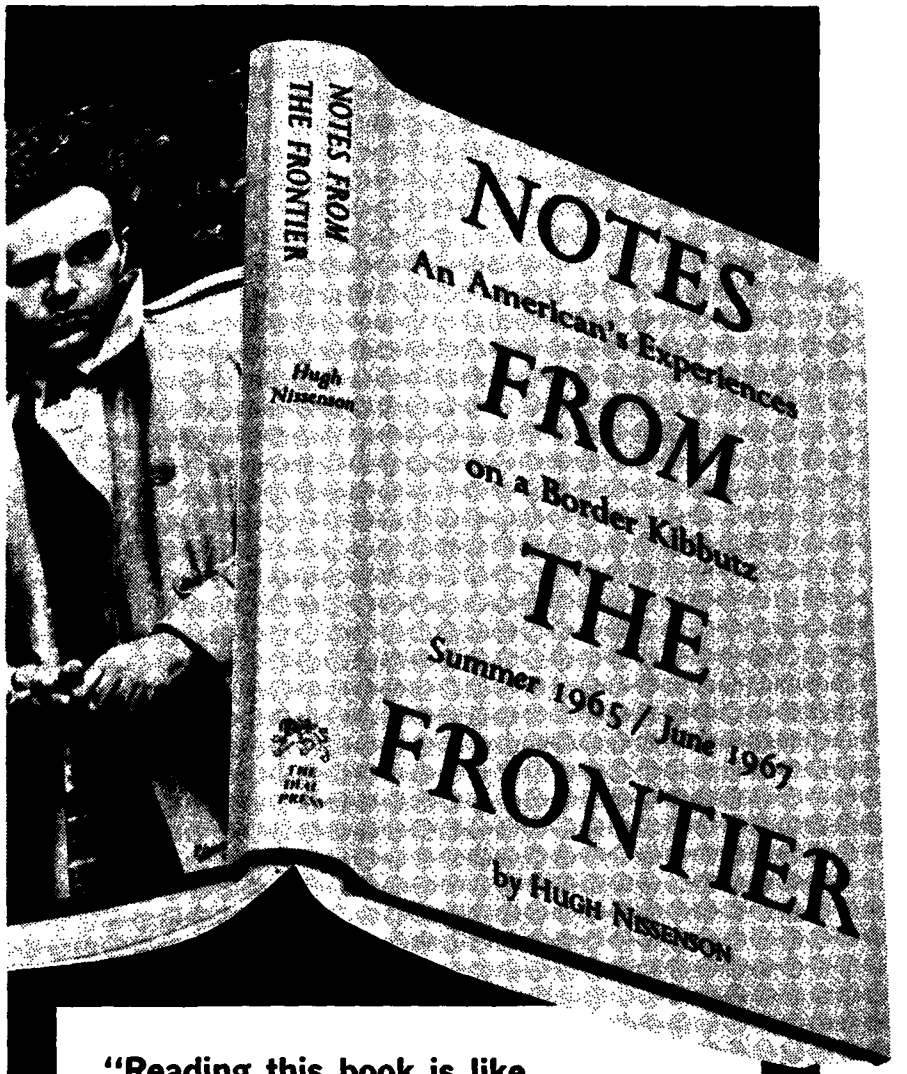
difficult to apply. But, in fact, the 20th century simplifies the problem. When all the major events of an era are massacres, the majority of those who take part in these events experience the single and incommunicable effect of death, and only a manageable few go on to experience psychic effects. In 1962, Robert Jay Lifton conducted interviews with seventy-five adults, men and women, who had lived through the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. The names of thirty-five were selected at random from the lists of survivors, while the rest were chosen on the basis of their known interest and competence in discussions of the atomic bomb. The Japanese, clinging to some anachronistic delicacy in these matters, prefer not to emphasize the advantage of the living over the dead and therefore call these people, as they are called in the book, *hibakusha,* "explosion-affected person (s)," rather than survivors.

The details of the actual bombing furnished by *Death in Life* render its first emotional effect, "psychic numbing," entirely convincing. Those who retained consciousness in the hours and days succeeding the blast lost for that time the capacity to feel for others —obviously, there was too much to feel for them to feel anything. This numbing enabled some *hibakusha* to deal with the revolting bodies of both wounded and dead, but it also enabled most *hibakusha not* to deal with these bodies. Dr. Lifton speaks at one point of an "addiction to survival"—on this universal drug, the living Japanese fought to live longer. The same self-concern at the core of their panic is stated even more explicitly in Robert Jungk's *Children of the Ashes*: in absolute terror, adults trampled children. It seems clear, both here and in other accounts of the bombing, that the only social bonds which held were those of the family.

In this sense of shock by catastrophe, the term "psychic numbing" is generally understood and accepted. Familiarity perhaps lends the term its vagueness as well. "Psychic numbing" is also applied in *Death in Life* to those persons who *arranged* the atomic bombing, and, ultimately, to all persons in



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modern society who evidence restrictions in feeling—as these restrictions appear not only in military euphemisms of pain and death, but also in such civilian responses as psychosomatic illness and insanity. All may be considered, Dr. Lifton argues, ways of continuing to live (or half-live) rather than of succumbing to the knowledge of death, but strictly, at the moment of Hiroshima, there must have been a psychological (as well as a moral) difference between those inured to the administration of death and those stunned beyond pity by the sight of sudden death. This was at least the difference between experience and naivete, habit and surprise. And such a distinction must still persist between psychic modes of inflicting and of enduring pain. Victimizers and victims may both be "numbed," but they arrive at the same condition from the opposite directions of power and vulnerability.

A second distinct effect upon the *hibakusha* was that of personal, national, and finally racial humiliation; and in this retrospective effect the image of the United States loomed larger, ironically, than it had in the original effect of suffering. A weapon had been used whose power was imperfectly gauged before its use. Therefore, soon after the war, an American organization called the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission (ABCC) was established in Hiroshima, and *hibakusha* were examined by its staff. The *hibakusha* stripped, gave blood samples, and exhibited the pink, rubbery scars which are called "keloids." They hoped for some treatment (which did not, in fact, exist) and took scrutiny in its place. Their tabulated injuries seemed merely to increase American understanding of the bomb's capacity to injure. The humiliation of the bomb itself (which suggested the cheapness of Japanese, if not of Asiatic, death) gave onto this humiliation of the ABCC (which suggested the insignificance of Asiatic life as well).

Out of this humiliation, the *hibakusha* have come to dwell upon what Dr. Lifton calls "Svengali" (American) associations and (Japanese) "guinea pig imagery." But what remains obscure in this psychic effect, is the dividing line between actuality and exaggeration—i.e., the point at which real disregard became a disregard only supposed by the Japanese. The use of the word *imagery* in *Death in Life* is crucial to this problem: it seems to be a mental process which is at once unavoidable and unsubstantiated—as though fact or truth always stood apart and observed in silence its distortions in the human consciousness, as in a false mirror. The mind, evidently, has no choice but to generate either life-promoting (desirable) or life-retarding (undesirable) images, but the relation of either set of images to reality, or to degrees of validity in the judgment of reality, is not easily determined.

THIS ALIENATION of the Japanese from the United States is more ambiguous and more variable than the *hibakusha*'s alienation from non-*hibakusha*. In a final chapter, which reverts to the term *survivor*, Dr. Lifton finds this type of alienation throughout World War II, emerging from the London blitz even as from the Nazi concentration camps. Victims appear to enter a caste of victims—as though, once damaged by other people (or by disease or accident?), the damaged can never reunite with other people. The fortunate, as we have known before, draw insensibly apart from the unfortunate: the well from the sick, the cheerful from the mournful, the rich from the poor. And the *hibakusha* have been, many of them, all of these—sick, sad, and poor. (It was the "inner city" of Hiroshima, the common, crowded, laboring heart of the place, over which the bomb directly exploded.) Moreover, many *hibakusha* bear the atomic stigmata of the keloid scars, and all are especially vulnerable to leukemia, if not to other types of cancer. And to marry a *hibakusha* involves the radical, though still unconfirmed, fear of abnormal children. The victims smell of trouble and death, and the non-victims recoil from contact with them, out of dread of dying too.

However, the *hibakusha*'s isolation has been not only imposed but acquiescent. It becomes clear in *Death in Life* that they are pos-

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sessed: they have experienced what they cannot forget and cannot describe. The most articulate insist upon the unspeakable nature of their past. Naturally, then, they gravitate toward other *hibakusha*, who need not be told anything. But at the same time, inimitable knowledge of the bombing prompts a distrust of all efforts to discuss it, and of all efforts to sympathize with it. Dr. Lifton emphasizes the *hibakusha*'s childlike hunger to tell and to be cared for, and their adult sense of the inadequacy or falsity of words ("selling the bomb") and of help, which they dismiss as "counterfeit nurturance." (Surely the word is *nurture*, not *nurturance*?) Hence, the *hibakusha* seem inhabitants of a sealed psychic sphere, like a bomb itself, in which they cannot hear properly or be heard.

Within this sphere, they are further impeded by the two emotions which dominate this book, "death anxiety" and "death guilt." Both of these are considered here, reasonably enough, to be consequences of an extraordinary "death immersion." Thereafter, each *hibakusha* has remembered death, feared death, and imagined his own death and that of other persons and other populations, more than the rest of us, us non-*hibakusha*, ever do. At the same time, each suffers intense guilt, not only the guilt of having lived while others died ("guilt over survival priority"), but also of having mistreated the dead. The lively replacement of "psychic numbing" is a revulsion from the self which was previously capable of indifference.

This sensation, Dr. Lifton indicates, is more complex in Japan than it might be, say, in Chicago or Los Angeles. It was our destiny, as actions used to be called in history books, to dehumanize for a time people who valued a meticulous courtesy to both the living and the dead. The American might feel the same guilt as the Japanese for having ignored the wounded, but probably not the same guilt for having (in such a situation) ignored the dead. But the Japanese dead are cultural presences. The souls of the bombed, restless, in every sense disoriented, and gravely displeased by their manner of dying, continue to

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live in the minds of the living. As we say to comfort, "He died instantaneously," the Japanese says, "He was not given time to contemplate his death." And all burial ceremony had been suspended. Bodies utterly vanished or putrefied in piles throughout the city before they were burned, like diseased cattle, *en masse*. So the *hibakusha* appears, in this account, incapable of moving past these brutalities, immobilized by regret and remorse. One observes, incidentally, that national and even racial emotions of anger, humiliation, and hostility are superficial in comparison to these emotions of anxiety and guilt —the basic liabilities, first of life and then of love.

Altogether, *Death in Life* exemplifies the virtues of formal scientific study: the collection of invaluable evidence, its intelligent organization and conscientious analysis. The primary concern of the book is psychoanalytic. Has this bombing experience kept the *hibakusha* from the fullest exercise of their powers? Has it atrophied their daring? Has it left them incapable of "mastery"—i.e., of any psychic formulation of their experience which might enable them to function as competently as people outside of Hiroshima? The conclusion is yes, and it receives support from the ways in which the *hibakusha* live and speak. Generally, Dr. Lifton's interpretation of their statements is persuasive.

At the same time, every book legitimately creates its own world out of the world it examines. In this second world of *Death in Life*, the constant repetition of the central terms, "death anxiety" and "death guilt," in commentary upon the *different* voices of the *hibakusha*, becomes a psychic phenomenon in itself. It is difficult to describe the counterpoint, one might say, which develops between the *hibakusha's* statements and the book in which they appear. The one seems expressive, the other reserved; the one tentative, the other decided; the one pensive or agitated or bitter, the other flat and controlled. The presumably typical *hibakusha* retain idiosyncrasy; the individual writer seems to represent a group. These contrasts result from what might be called the reductive thrust, which is also the therapeutic intention, of psychoanalysis. That is, each *hibakusha's* words at least momentarily reflect him alone—even as his scarred face must be his alone. But to the analyst, the words of the patient are at once an entrance to, and an obscuration of, the essential matter: they are like a curtain which must be opened to find, for the sake of treatment, the reiterative symptoms of illness. And one feels in *Death in Life* an urge to treat and to cure. This is a natural predisposition toward these unfortunate people, but also a predisposition which encourages the immediate and invariable reduction of whatever a subject says to these two emotions, death anxiety and death guilt.

In time, this reduction becomes dull, but the argument of the book is too important for such a "reading" consideration. What is troublesome, however, at the argument's level is the sense that this diagnostic purpose, this determination to define what keeps the *hibakusha* from *becoming* well, unintentionally slights the qualities which they show *as they are*, in stasis, as permanently marred people. It does not seem to signify enough that, however dark their psychic space may be, their words frequently burst out of it with wit or grace or fire or perspicacity. Some of them ask questions and frame answers which would prove only moral sensitivity or philosophic intelligence in the well, but which in them seem always primarily to affirm illness. *Death in Life* is an admirable book within its discipline. But perhaps every discipline, as the word suggests, must to some degree confine humanity.

Medieval Jews

A MEDITERRANEAN SOCIETY. Volume I: ECONOMIC FOUNDATIONS. By S. D. GOITEIN. *University of California Press. 550 pp. $12.95.*

Reviewed by CHARLES ISSAWI

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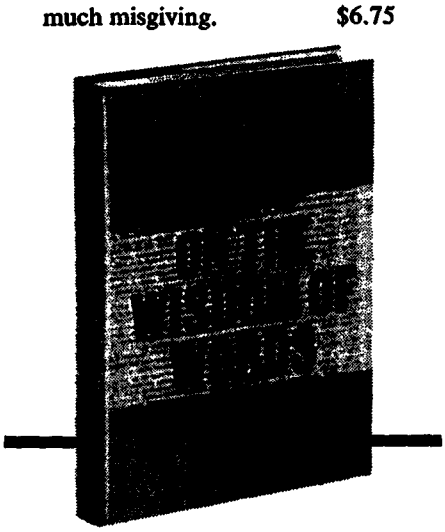

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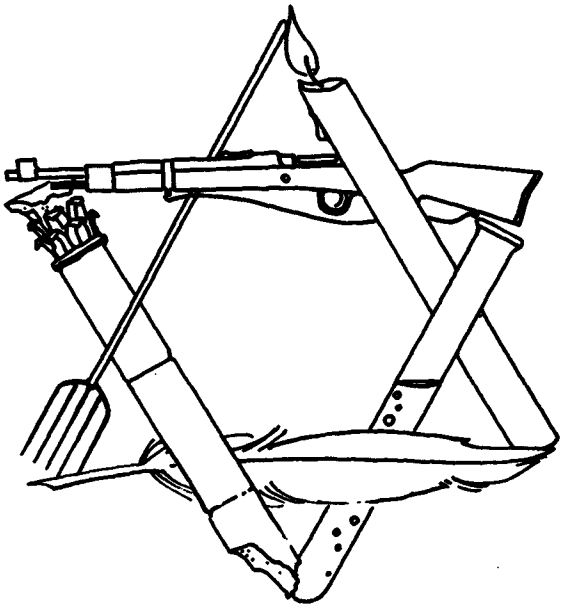

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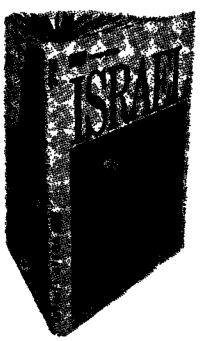

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for long were kept in leading strings. No wonder they have seldom strayed outside such pastures as philology and literature, theology and law, and military and dynastic history, neglecting the diet provided by economic and social history, the history of science and technology, anthropology, and comparative sociology and politics. And no wonder too that the animals are so anemic and incapable of doing an honest day's work. Or that our knowledge of Islamic civilization is so rudimentary, compared not only with Europe and Classical Antiquity but also with China and Japan.

One of the main reasons for these shortcomings has been the paucity of Muslim archival material, that is, with the conspicuous exception of the Ottoman Empire. To take only one example, the absence of censuses or "parish" registers of marriages, births, and deaths means that—again except for the Ottoman period—demographic studies can use only the conjectural data provided by archaeology, travelers' accounts, and other literary sources, and army and tax lists. The same applies to most fields of economic and social activity.

It is these considerations that make Professor Goitein's study so particularly valuable, since it is based on one of the richest archival sources available on medieval Islam, the Geniza documents. The Geniza was the storehouse attached to the synagogue of Old Cairo into which Jews threw discarded documents bearing the name of God or written in Hebrew script, since to destroy them would have been impious. The existence of the Geniza has been known since 1864, and its contents have been scattered over four continents, but it remained for Professor Goitein to realize its potential value for economic history. The attitude of earlier researchers is well exemplified in a remark appearing in a printed catalogue and quoted by him: "Business letter, and therefore valueless." Ten years of intensive work in libraries ranging from Leningrad and Jerusalem to Cambridge and New York, and a lifetime devoted to Semitic studies and research on Oriental Jewish communities, have enabled Goitein to make one of the most important contributions to medieval Islamic and Jewish history. The present volume is to be followed by two others, "The Community" and "Daily Life and the Individual," and by a translation of numerous Geniza texts. In addition there will be a collection of documents on the India trade. When complete, the series will constitute an incomparable mine of information and a rich storehouse of historical interpretation.

The Geniza documents, most of which are written in the Arabic language and Hebrew script, are of the most varied, including wills, deeds, contracts, accounts, bills of lading, inventories, letters, charms, children's exercise books, etc. They originate from, or are addressed to, most of the countries bordering the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean in which Jews lived during the period covered by this book, the High Middle Ages, i.e., 950-1250. Skillfully used by Goitein, they throw a flood of light on the daily life of the medieval Jewish communities in Islamic lands. And since, as Goitein repeatedly stresses, the Jews lived in close proximity to and mingled freely with Muslims and Christian, worked in much the same occupations, including farming, ate the same kinds of food, and wore the same kinds of clothing, the picture he draws is also largely true for the wider world of Mediterranean Islam.

What were the characteristics of this world—more particularly of 11th-century Fatimid Egypt—as revealed in the Geniza? First of all, one is struck by the great degree of *laissez-faire, laissez-passer* prevailing. "During the High Middle Ages men, goods, money, and books used to travel far and almost without restrictions throughout the Mediterranean area. In many respects, the area resembled a free trade community. The treatment of foreigners, as a rule, was remarkably liberal." Christians and Jews paid a poll tax, but do not seem to have been otherwise discriminated against. Even in Palestine during the Crusades, in the words of the traveler Ibn Jubayr: "Reciprocity prevails and equal treatment in all respects. The warriors are engaged in their wars, while the people are at ease."

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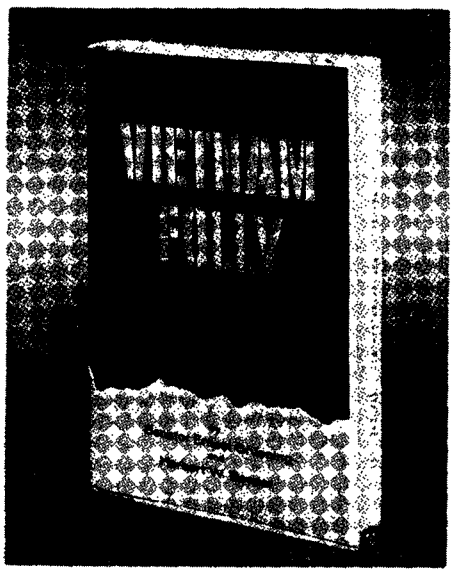

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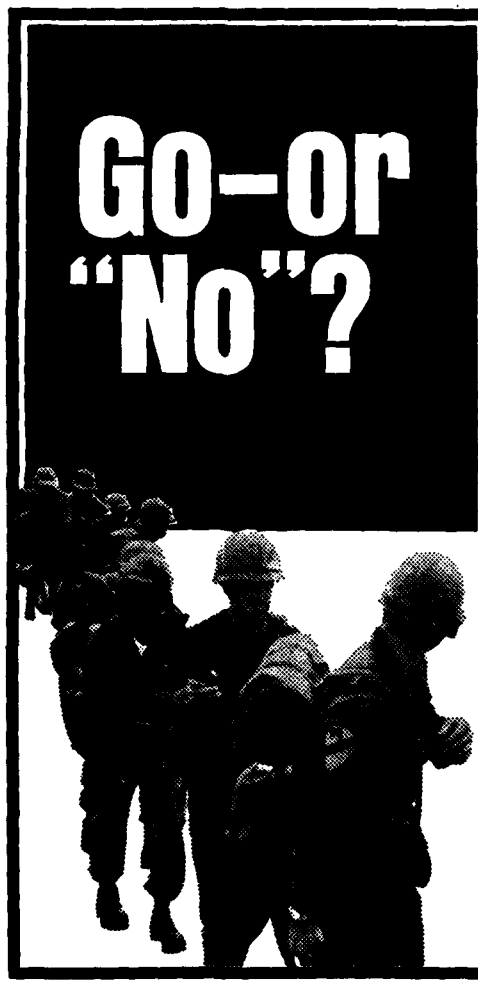

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As is well known, the government let each religious community manage its own affairs, with very little interference, but one is surprised to learn that: "The Islamic injunction that no one should be converted to any religion except Islam was largely disregarded. Many male and female slaves must have been baptized to Judaism." Similarly, for good or for ill, there was little attempt by the state to carry out an economic policy. Of course the government made its presence felt as the main buyer and seller in the market, often to the detriment of merchants. And then there were taxes—which, however, could not have been too heavy since a sales tax of 2 per cent levied in Alexandria around 1050 provoked the following complaint: "Much was lost from the price of the goods I sold for you in Alexandria, for every damned dinar in Alexandria goes down the drain through a rescript of the government. For every 50 dinars in number they asked from me one dinar. I said to them: 'One does not make a profit of one dinar on 50.'"

Another characteristic of Islamic society during that period was its fluidity—"halfway between the rigid system of feudalism and the mobility of a free modern society, but nearer to the latter." For one thing, "slaves certainly formed only a small minority of the population, unlike the situation in imperial Rome." For another, no rigid form of feudalism, or serfdom, developed—"The lord being the beneficiary rather than the master of the village." And again and again one is struck by the extent to which Jews, while concentrating on certain occupations, participated in the craft guilds, formed partnerships with Muslims, and generally shared in the economic and social life of their country.

The book is, of course, replete with detailed information on business organization and practice. Division of labor between the crafts seems to have been carried farther than in Rome, or than it was to be in the Middle East in subsequent centuries. The normal unit of production was "a small workshop run by a single craftsman, a family, a clan, or by a number of partners, usually not more than five." How-

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ever, both sugar refining and paper making were carried out in large plants, employing many wage earners. In trade a wide variety of forms may be distinguished, including family firms and several types of partnership, in which the parties contributed different shares of capital or work. Accounts were of course kept but "there are no ledgers in the Geniza, no remnants of systematic bookkeeping." What is more surprising is that during the 11th century "numbers were rendered by Hebrew letters. . . . During the entire Middle Ages numerals were used only by mathematicians in their scientific works, but not by Middle Eastern merchants until they learned the great technical merits of these numerals from the Europeans."

In so highly monetized an economy, credit was naturally widely used and banking quite extensive. "Business was normally conducted on credit, and to a higher degree, perhaps, than is the case in our own society." Both Muslims and Jews lent each other money "on fixed interest" and merchants and craftsmen helped one another with interest-free loans. The general shortage of currency, the existence of many different coins in circulation, and the desire to avoid the risks and expense of transferring cash, led to the widespread use of paper, including checks (the word is of Persian origin), bills of exchange, orders of payment, and promissory notes. In this way large sums could be transferred over great distances, along the main trade routes of Islam.

It may be added that the period under study seems to have been one of general price and wage stability. Individual prices, however, fluctuated widely, causing one writer to say: "Prices follow no principle" and another: "The prices are in the hand of God"!

Land transportation was slow, risky, and expensive. "Travelers who did not go on foot used riding beasts. Carriages, so common in the Roman period, had completely disappeared" and were not to return to the Middle East until the very end of the 18th century. Moreover, Sabbath restrictions made it very difficult for Jews to travel in caravans. Hence the bulk of passenger and goods traffic went by sea—perhaps eight thousand merchants a year on the Tunis-Sicily-Egypt route—and generally for long distances, notwithstanding the dangers of shipwreck and piracy. Goitein's calculations show that on the more valuable items, such as cloth, sea freights amounted to only a small fraction of cost. But it should be remembered that in the Muslim, as in the classical, period no ships set sail on the Mediterranean from November through March.

The 10th-11th centuries marked the peak of medieval Islam. By the 12th, seapower in the Mediterranean had passed to the Europeans. The response of the Jews was to shift to the Indian trade. But the continuation of the Crusades exacerbated Muslim feelings. Under the Ayyubids, who succeeded the Fatimids in 1171, an orthodox reaction set in, and government support was given to the Karimi merchants, to the detriment of Jewish trade. Under the Mamluks (1250-1517) there was both economic deterioration and an increase in bigotry, and the Karimis were in turn to be wiped out by government extortion in the 15th century. The Middle East had entered its long decline.

Nostalgic Ideology

THE CONSERVATIVE TRADITION IN AMERICA. By ALLEN GUTTMANN. *Oxford University Press. 214 pp. $6.00.*

Reviewed by PETER SHAW

A LITERARY STUDY of the conservative tradition in America sounds like a useful undertaking. We have had books on the liberal imagination and the liberal tradition; why not, in a spirit of fairness to both sides, have a look at the other tradition? Professor Guttmann has proposed to do so and, by excluding muddled conservatives like Barry Goldwater, has hoped to

PETER SHAW, *a new contributor, teaches at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. Mr. Shaw's essays have appeared in various journals, including the* American Scholar, *the* New Leader, *and* Critical Quarterly.

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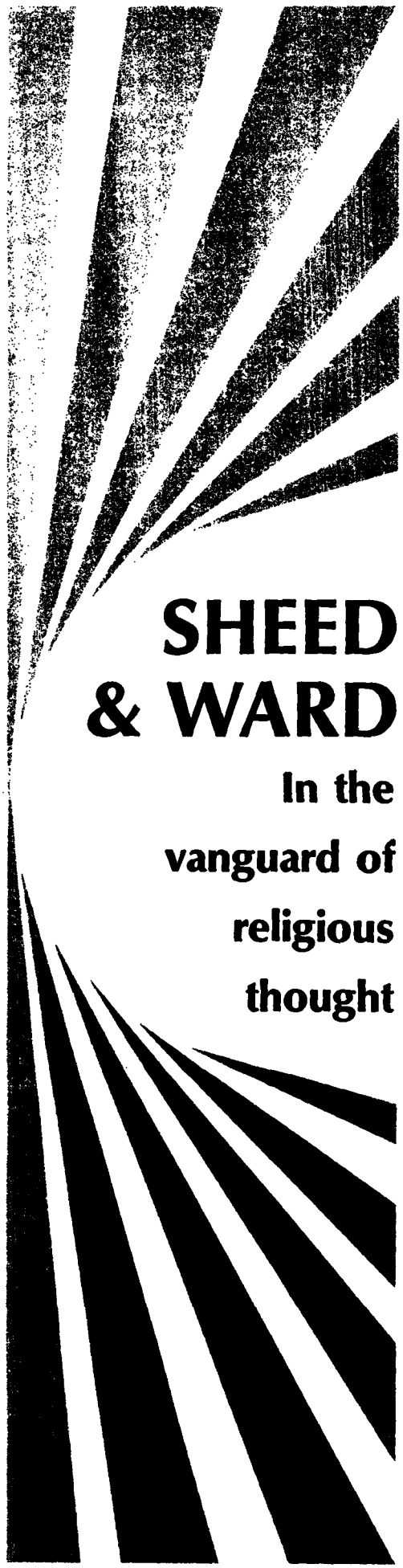

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keep his discussion on a high plane.

The first part of *The Conservative Tradition in America* presents the findings of recent scholarship on the politics of the revolution and the early Republic. Guttmann rejects attempts to revise the American Revolution into a conservative event, and agrees with Louis Hartz that the American political tradition is essentially liberal. Turning to American literature, and slightly revising two of his own scholarly essays, Guttmann looks for conservatism in some little known works of James Fenimore Cooper, of Hawthorne, and of Washington Irving, whose "Burkean Conservatism" was "instinctively rather than rationally held." He then goes on to deal with some of James's major works, though with disappointing brevity. There is also an essay on religion in America, in which T.S. Eliot appears, and one on the military, featuring Captain Vere, of Melville's *Billy Budd*. (Guttmann calls Vere a Burkean Conservative, but is careful not to claim that Melville is necessarily in full sympathy with Vere.) The last two chapters are on "The Revival of Conservative Ideas" in the 20th century. Here again the main figures, with the exception of Santayana, turn out not really to have been conservatives. All the same, Guttmann convincingly outlines Henry Adams's approach to history, explains the split between the New Humanists and T.S. Eliot over religion, and efficiently outlines the ideas of the Southern Agrarians. His survey of tangential thought is brought down to the present with the observation, in the last chapter, that the group around the *National Review* represents not conservatism but old-fashioned, 19th-century, *laissez-faire* liberalism.

Finally putting his cards on the table, Guttmann returns to literature and gives as the one author who successfully embodies his conservative tradition . . . James Gould Cozzens. He contents himself with saying that *By Love Possessed* "is still a very good" novel despite Dwight Macdonald's seemingly definitive debunking essay. In Cozzens's novel, according to Guttmann, "there is no ultimate truth, there is only the wisdom of our fathers, passed on to us in the institutions

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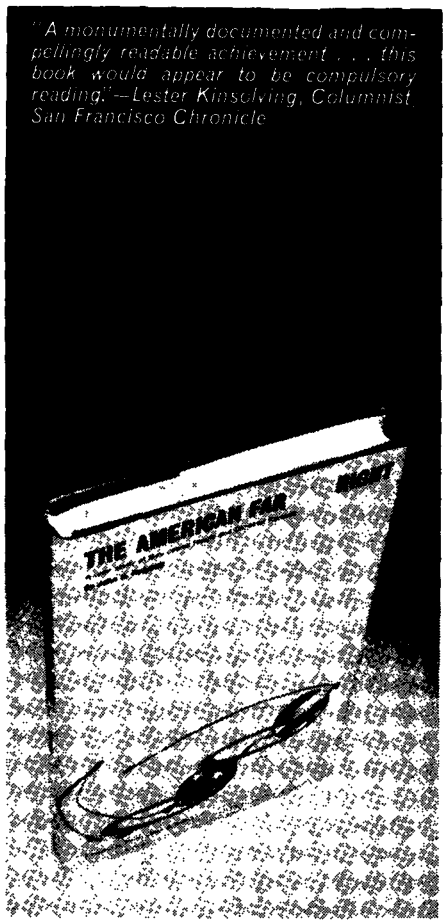

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they fashioned." The trouble with this formula, and with Guttmann's book as a whole, is that the wisdom it offers is about as helpful as the advice in the *Spaulding Handbook of Sports*—"Keep on your toes, always be ready to move in any direction"—it is unarguable, but useless.

Guttmann's thesis rests on a distinction between lower-case conservatism, which is merely the politics of resistance to change, and upper-case, Burkean "Conservatism as an ideology, as a body of interrelated political theorems." Guttmann is aware that Burke himself was both kinds of a conservative, but he is interested less in the defender of the *status quo* than in the Burke who revered the past. Burke's value is that he "preferred the wisdom of experience to rational inquiry," and those who stand in the American "conservative tradition" share in this regard for the past.

GUTTMANN's distinction between two types of Burkean conservatism is a useful one, but he makes a mistake when he calls the tradition of regard for the past "an ideology." In politics, first of all, Burkean Conservatism was from the outset an anachronism in this country; Guttmann in fact admits this, and agrees that Russell Kirk's attempt to trace an American political tradition from Burke is, as the scholars have said, simply in error. But if conservatism soon died politically, Guttmann believes that it survived in American literature, to which he turns in search of conservative ideas. These he fails to find. What he does find is a collection of old manses and lamented shells of ancestral homes which he erects into a system of thought that is supposed to be a viable alternative to the perplexities of liberalism:

> Conservatism as an ideology is an alternative to the dilemma of primitivism or progress. Architectural metaphors are its cardinal images of value.

For those who may have avoided current literary jargon it should be explained that "architectural metaphors" and "images" mean *houses*. Now, there is no doubt some use in going over the architecture of the houses that have given their names to American novels: Irving's *Bracebridge Hall*, Cooper's *Satanstoe*, Hawthorne's *The House of the Seven Gables*, as well as James's Gardencourt in *The Portrait of a Lady*, or Allen Tate's Pleasant Hill in *The Fathers*. That American authors indulge in nostalgia for old homes, in common with the English, French, Russian, and Chinese is undeniable. But the attempt to make a tradition of judicious conservatism out of this nostalgia, which is at bottom not an ideology but only a feeling, is to misapprehend the nature of our literature. As Richard Chase put it some years ago, in an essay mentioned but not discussed by Guttmann, "the life of the best American novels and poems depends on an imagination that is contradictory, unstable, disruptive, fragmentary and extreme." Chase did find a conservative "impulse" toward order in the same novels and poems, but he said that the radical imagination in them was never reconciled with it. There is no finely balanced American literary masterpiece because, despite the conservative impulse, the radical imagination has always accurately reflected the violence and disorder of American life—reflected what Chase professorially designated "the discontinuities of American experience." The best American literature, then, may be characterized by Chase's formula, "conservative impulse, radical idea." Guttmann joins those critics whose preference for a more reasonable literature leads them to look for static imaginings of order, like houses, that can represent a "middle way" between the two extremes of the American imagination. In doing so he misses the driving force of that imagination; and, if American literature is a reflection of American life, he also misrepresents the nature of American reality.

IT IS NOT surprising that, in the really interesting books Guttmann deals with, the authors are ambiguous about the meaning of their houses. He is able to find a truly conservative awe for the past only in minor authors (James Gould Cozzens), or in the minor works of major authors (Hawthorne's later novels). In his search for a fic-

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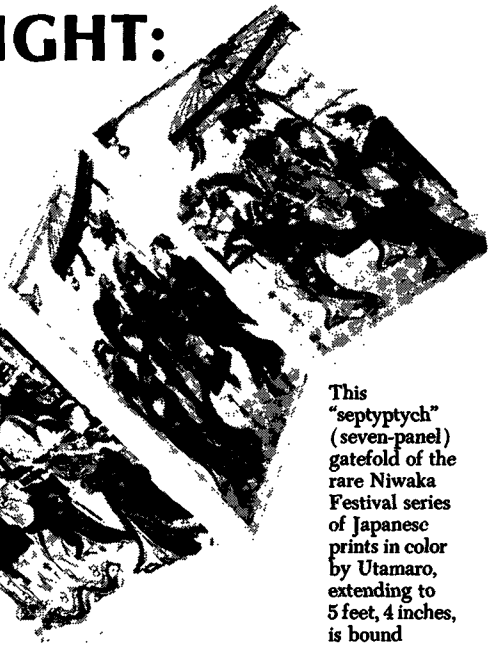

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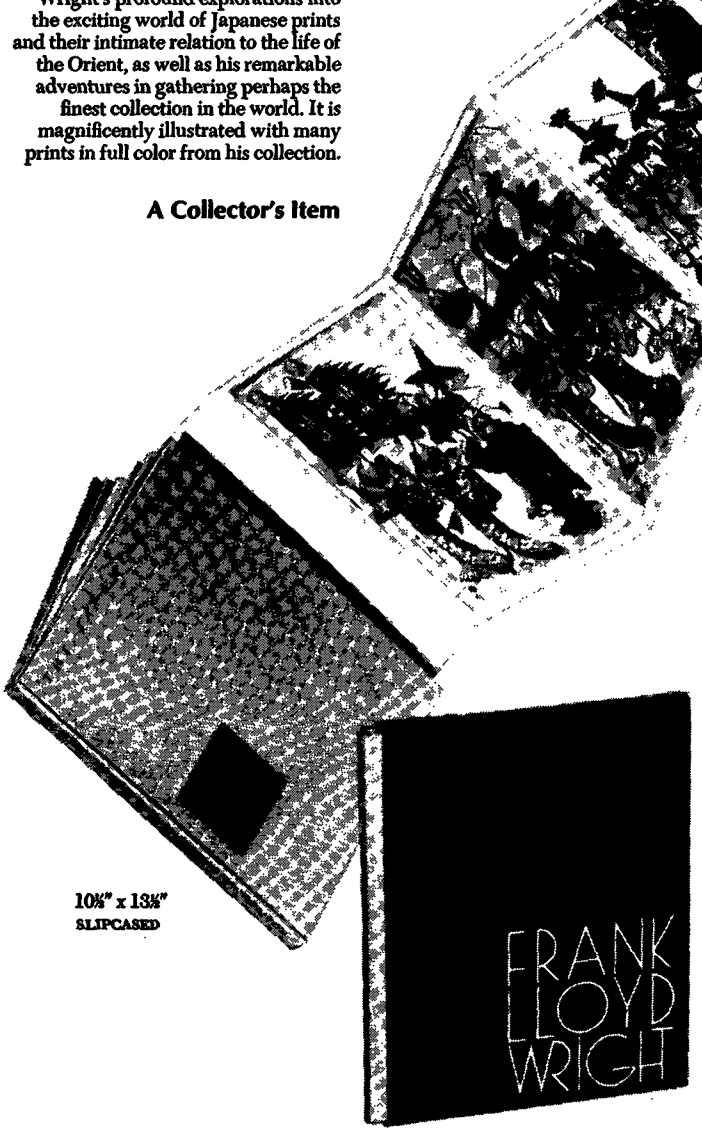

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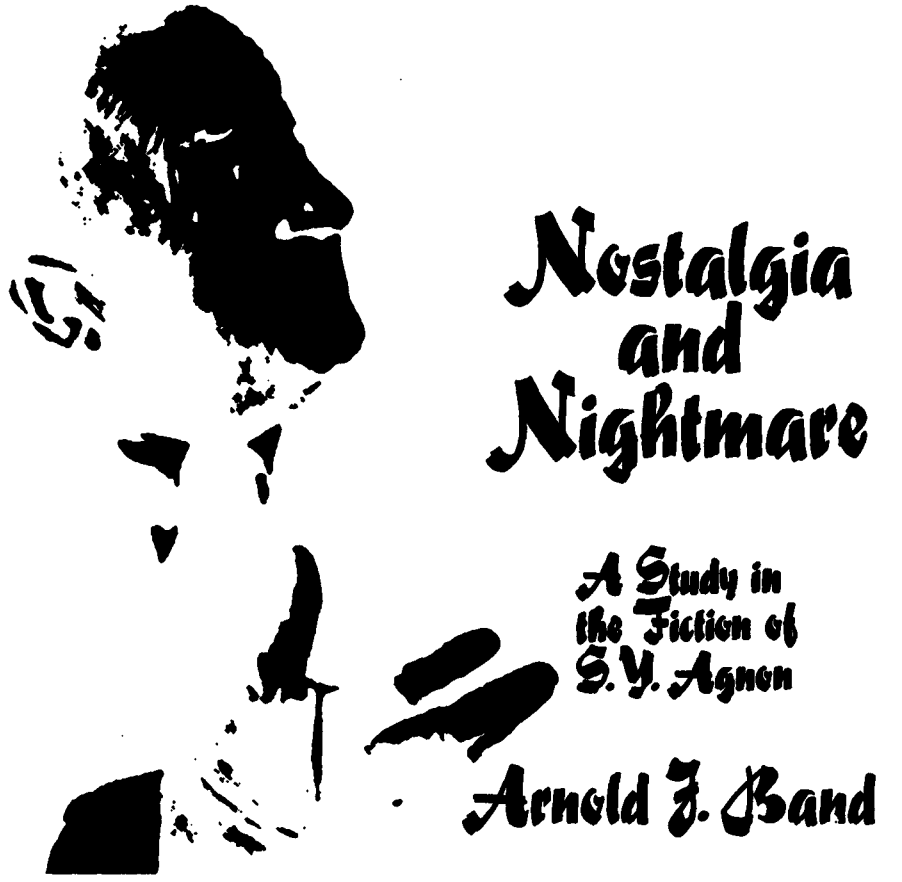

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tional house that does not fall apart by the end of the book, he solemnly takes as an affirmation of "the possibility of permanence and the values of society" the ironic survival of the house built by Flem Snopes, Faulkner's prime ravener of civilized values. Guttmann does not recognize that the other houses he cites were also destroyed by the workings of the radical imagination of disaster that so often accompanies an American writer's impulse toward order. They all have to come down: the House of Usher, James's Poynton, Jay Gatsby's mansion, and Thomas Sutpen's in Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!* The American writer can hope for an ordered civilization in America, but he cannot portray it without violating his sense of reality.

ALTHOUGH few would deny the present necessity for a sense of the past, the question is whether one has to construct a conservative tradition in order to foster it. Guttmann claims that "liberal democracy and social democracy are both oriented toward the future, neither is ready yet to indulge in that sense of the past which is fundamental to conservative thought." But his evidence contradicts him. Far from being the exclusive property of conservatives, a sense of the past is often just what they lack a hold on.

The New Critics, for instance, were conservatives, and, as Guttmann persuasively shows, their formalist aesthetic implied their conservative politics. They called for the acceptance of one's place in society as they did for the acceptance of traditional literary forms. But the New Critics were completely unhistorical, and it took a liberal critic, Lionel Trilling, to point up their neglect of tradition in his essay, "The Sense of the Past," in *The Liberal Imagination*. T.S. Eliot, also in Guttmann's pantheon, intoned the virtues of tradition, but his model of literary history was perfectly unhistorical. (Eliot conceived all the works of the past as having a simultaneous existence in which their relationship to one another was spatial, not historical.) Though Guttmann writes that "one cannot be a conservative without a sense of the

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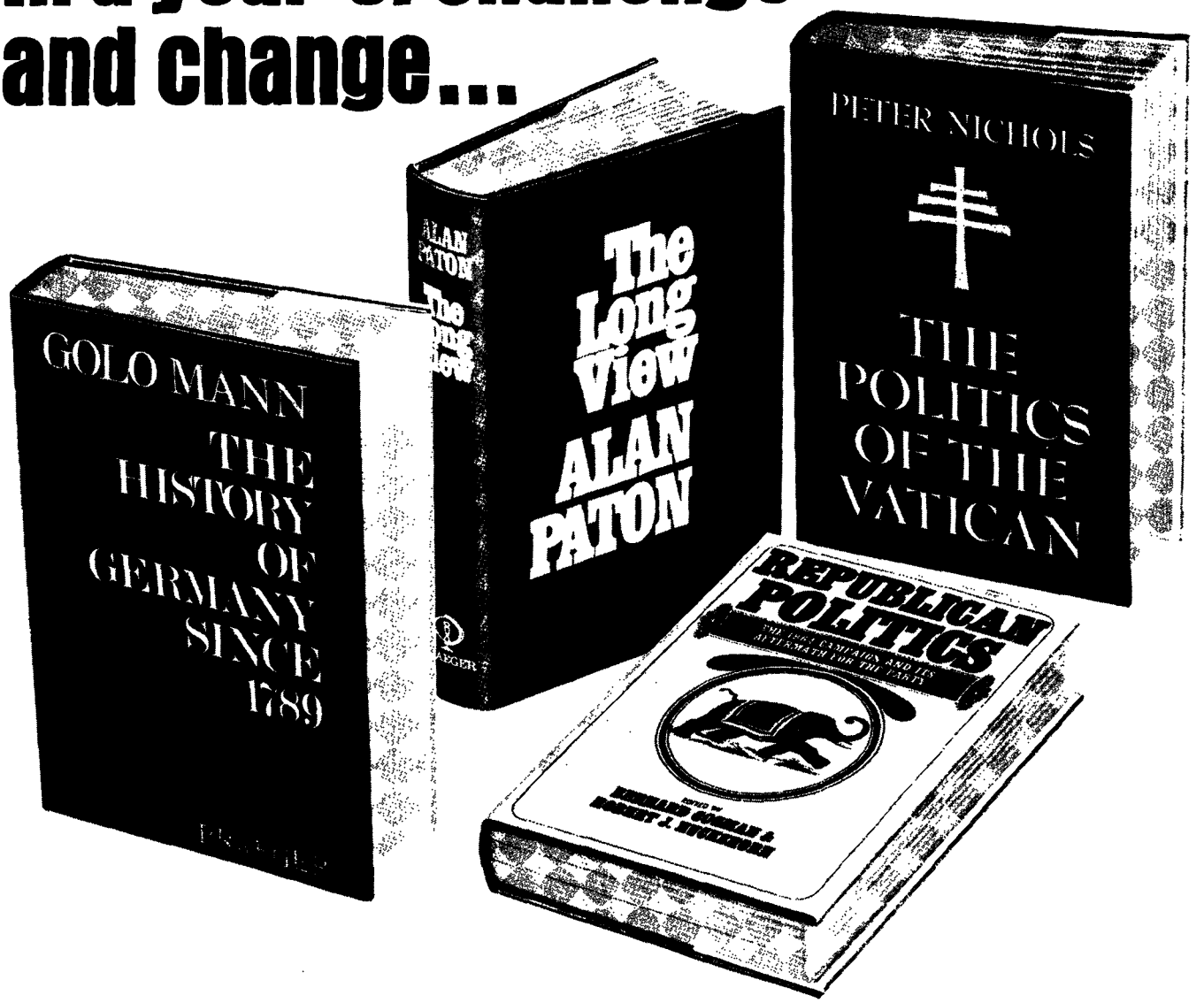

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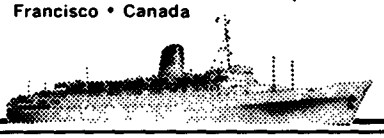

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past," the conservative imagination has usually lacked just that. It is not surprising that the American past has been rediscovered by liberal, not conservative critics.

During the 50's there was great interest in the possibility of starting a dialogue in America between liberals and conservatives. *The Liberal Imagination* was an attempt to sympathize with the hierarchical values of authors like James, Yeats (in "Ancestral Houses"), and Fitzgerald, accompanied by a refusal to honor authors like Dreiser and Sherwood Anderson merely because they satisfied liberal prejudices. But an effort of sympathy was the most one could accord to conservatism, at its heart an impulse, not an idea. Trilling, Chase, and others concluded that a meaningful dialogue was not logically possible between American liberals and conservatives. Liberalism would have to provide its own critique of itself. I suspect that they hoped to straighten out not only liberals about this, but conservatives as well. If so, they failed. Books about conservative "ideas" are apparently destined to continue appearing.

GUTTMANN's handling of the past illustrates the limitations of conservative imagination. Attempting to resurrect the reputation of Thomas Hutchinson, the Colonial historian, he writes:

> Literary anthologies have long presented the Revolution as an allegory in which fair-haired Democrats vanquished skulky Aristocrats, but it is time for the *History of Massachusetts-Bay* to be read along with Franklin's *Autobiography* and Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia.*

Later he turns to "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," Hawthorne's "one great story [that] turns on the American Revolution," and accepts the current liberal-allegorical interpretation that, "viewed politically, it is a somber affirmation of independence from the past."

This acceptance is a good example of how one can talk about the past without examining it. There is much to be said about this story of a boy who comes to town seeking to be set up in life by his

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wealthy and influential uncle, only, after hours of confused searching through streets of fantastically-dressed, ghostly conspirators, to see him tarred and feathered and being ridden out of town. Though it has had much attention and varying interpretations, Hawthorne's story still deserves the scrutiny of anyone interested in the sense of the past in our literature and history. But Guttmann's sights are narrowed; he is looking for evidences of conservatism in old buildings, and so he leaves the story to the liberal critics. He finds in other stories that Hawthorne is conservative because he believes that "we inherit the evil our fathers did, and we do evil ourselves," yet he doesn't see that this is also the point of "My Kinsman, Major Molineux."

But it doesn't take a conservative to see this point; in fact it is a radical reading that brings it out. The story opens with an account, taken from Hutchinson's *History*, of how six Colonial governors were overthrown by mobs. The time is well before the Revolution, to emphasize the continuity of that event with previous usurpations, specifically, the ouster of Hutchinson himself, who was the Colonial Governor on the eve of the Revolution. Hawthorne was emphasizing the wantonness, not the spirit of freedom in the Revolution, as Robert Lowell brought out in his recent stage version of the story. An historically-minded radical critic would see this, because he would be less likely to accept the Revolution as a legitimizing event than to connect it with a long history of violent seizures of Mexican and Indian lands and with the present remorseless exercise of American force in Vietnam. The radical tradition keeps the American literary past alive by constantly reinterpreting it; the conservative tradition by its bland acceptance of the past renders it irrelevant.

BY ASSUMING that there must be a logical alternative to liberalism, Guttmann ends up associating himself with the worst tendencies in American life. He asks:

> Of what relevance is the conservative imagination today? What can conservatives contribute to a new synthesis of American ideals?

He finds his answer, probably much against his own instincts, in the ethic of "the Military Establishment." Of all things, this turns out to be Guttmann's citadel of egalitarianism ("neither birth nor wealth is a factor in military leadership"), and of freedom ("the evidence suggests that the discipline of military organization may actually diminish authoritarian tendencies").

Cozzens in literature, the military in politics. Such are the results of assuming that there are two traditions, from which assumption it next follows that there must be two sides to every controversy—an extreme liberal and an extreme conservative—with a truly conservative and therefore correct position somewhere in between. It never occurs to the author that sometimes there are more than two sides to a question. Thus, on Vietnam, we get the legacy of Eisenhower's middle-of-the-road thinking:

> One of the gravest dangers is that policy-makers will give way to the liberal public's clamor for an immediate solution to international ills. It is certainly not helpful to be advised to bomb the rest of mankind back to the Stone Age in order to retire to the peaceful ramparts of Fortress America. It is no more helpful to be told to make love and not war.

In his attempt to set off the reasonableness of the conservative position—genocide is "not helpful"—Guttmann has to legitimize crackpot ideas on the one side and incorrectly identify the other extreme of opinion with liberalism. The very positing of a conservative tradition tends to distort reality.

To be mistaken in good faith is yet to be mistaken. There is no difference intellectually between a rabid championship of wrong ideas and the mild affirmation of them by a genially skeptical professor. Allen Guttmann is careful to distinguish the reverence for the past that characterizes his own conservatism from the exploitation of the past by those interested only in preserving their advantages in the present. But in the end he shows that it is possible to be guilty through, if not by, association. Reasonable in tone and restrained in making claims for his thesis though he is, Guttmann is not as different from his know-nothing kinsmen as he thinks.

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